Determinants of Higher Education for Scheduled Castes in Uttar Pradesh: A Socio-Economic Analysis

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Abstract
Primarily a relationship between socio-economic conditions of Scheduled Castes (SCs) and achievement in higher education have been discussed in available academic literature. This relationship is complex, multidimensional and varied at different level. The present paper is an attempt to measures the magnitude of impact of the socio-economic factors on achievement in higher education among SCs. The study is based on the quantitative analysis of primary data surveyed from households in three districts of Uttar Pradesh namely, Faizabad, Sonbhadra and Lucknow. Logistic Regression Analysis (LRA) reveals that sex of students, low level of parental education, lack of educational resource, workforce participation by student, lack of good mode of transportation to reach the college and marital status of student are most important educational determinant which, are eventually responsible for low level of achievement in higher education among SCs.

Keywords: Educational-Determinant, Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER), Higher-Education, Scheduled Castes (SCs), Socio-Economic Factor.

Introduction
In the context of Indian society which is based on hierarchal social order, the parameters of gender, caste, class, religion and region are crucial in determine to achieving higher education. Scheduled Castes (SCs) constitute 16.63% of the total population in India and their proportion among the total Hindu population is still higher. Uttar Pradesh constitutes contains 20.53% of the total SCs population of the country and 20.70% of the population of Uttar Pradesh are SCs (Census of India, 2011). Total 10.2% of the total students are SCs enrolled in higher education. When we consider the number of SCs students, between the ages of 18-24 years, who were enrolled in higher education in 2005-2006, the figure is only 8.37% (MHRD, 2010). The problem is further clarified when we considered the number of students who actually graduate from higher education. In a latest study it reveals that about 4.19% of SCs student enrolled in higher education completed the degree in 2000 (Thorat, 2006). The SCs, thus, are still lagging behind when compared to the general population when it comes to the proportion enrolled in higher education. Thus, in this paper it has been attempted to find out the major educational determinants and its impact on achievement in higher education for SCs in the study area. The paper is based on quantitative analysis of primary data surveyed from households in three districts of Uttar Pradesh. There are six educational determinants have been identified i.e. sex of the students, parent’s education, educational resource and assets, workforce participation by student, mode of transportation and marital status of student which, have played significant role in achieving higher education among the SCs.

Overview of Literature
The present state of the higher education among SCs has its roots in the historical, and socio-economic constraints. *Shudras* (SCs) and women are marked out in the *dharmshtras* for indignities of every conceivable kind. They are debarred from most of the ordinary graces of life (Béteille, 2003). A *manusmriti* verse cites ‘A shudra should not be released from servitude (Buhler, 1964). A shudra are prohibited to get education and study. Shudra students and he whose teacher is a shudra shall become disqualified for being educating to a shudra. A shudra is unfit of receive education and the upper *varnas* should not impart education to a shudra (The Law of Manu: IV-78-81 & III-156, 1964). This situation aggrieved during the ancient, medieval and modern period of times when severe forms of
untouchability were practiced and *shudras* even today they are considered as pollutants in rural areas. Historically, SCs were engaged in menial and defiling occupations and were characterized by widespread illiteracy, mass unemployment, low income, low technology and scarcity of resources (Sinha, 1981). Although the enrolment is lowest among the poor casual wage labour household in rural and urban area, it is particularly low among the same poor group from the SC/ST/OBC (Sriwastava and Sinha, 2008). Further, the SCs’ educational status are very low literacy rates, high dropout rates at primary level, secondary and higher education, a low quality of education, and the existence of highly discriminatory and exclusionary malpractices which sometimes refuse SCs’ education all together (Thorat, 2009). Poor socio-economic background and lower quality of primary and secondary schools are the major reasons for the poor performance and access to higher education among the SCs (Velaskar, 1986). The primary reason for which SCs students drop out of college is failure at exams; but almost as significant was a need to find employment in order to provide financial support for oneself and one’s family (Aikara, 1980). The SC students hail from a less privileged socio-economic background, it has attributed to higher dropout rate in this category (Weisskopf, 2004). Aikara has inferred that the high dropout arises out of a compulsion for employment to feed and support the family (Aikara, 1980). Considering the whole argument, we find that higher education today stands at the crossroads where a large section of society is still deprived. The deprivation is in the form of lack of access and has to be linked with the socio-economic environment. Consequently, the gap between the deprived sections and the well-off counterparts has widened over a period. Therefore, in the research paper it has been tried to dig out educational determinants and its impact on higher education for SCs.

**Research Methodology**

The basic research question for present study is that “what is the magnitude of impact of socio-economic determinants in achieving the higher education among the SCs”? A source of data for the present paper is based on primary household survey in three districts of Uttar Pradesh namely, Faizabad, Sonbhadra and Lucknow with 166, 166 and 172 samples respectively during 2011. Logistic Regression Analysis (LRA) has been exercised because the dependent variables are dichotomous (reported Yes or No). Logistic Regression model makes it possible to estimate the probability of enrolment/attained in higher education, conditional on the independent variables included in the model. The technique of Logistic Regression is adopted for individual level data analysis (Rutherford and Choe, 1993). In order to estimate the effect of socio-economic factors on higher education among SCs the dichotomous dependent variables are used, i) Whether the Scheduled Caste students are achieved (enrolled/attained) (1) or not join/discontinue (0) the Higher Education after completing the senior secondary (17-24 years) age group (Yes/No). Explanatory variables or independent variables are used for the study are, sex of the students, parent’s education, educational resource and assets, workforce participation by student, mode of transportation and marital status of student.

**Results**

**Table-1, Odds Ratio of Logistic Regression for Achievement (Enrolled/Attained) in Higher Education**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>Exp (β) and Significance level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sex of Student</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female ®</td>
<td>2.485***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Father’s Level of Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illiterate ®</td>
<td>0.954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior High School</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School (10th)</td>
<td>1.87 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate (10+2)</td>
<td>2.63**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduation</td>
<td>3.29**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Graduation &amp; Above</td>
<td>4.56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Educational Recourses & Facilities
Separate room ®
Chair & Table 0.352***
Electric lamp 0.495
Stationary 0.830
Books 2.029***

Mode to Reach the College
By Walk ®
By Bicycle 1.728**
By Public transport 2.858**
By Motor cycle 2.303

Workforce Participation by Student
Working student ®
Non-Working student 1.603*

Marital Status of the Student
Married ®
Unmarried 3.438***

Age at Effective Marriage
Below 18 yrs ®
Between 18-25 yrs 0.258**
More than 25 yrs 0.357***

Source: Computed from Household Field Work Data, 2011.
Total numbers of observations (SC students): 504
*** = at 1 percent level, ** = at 5 percent level and
* = at 10 percent level, ®= Reference Category

The general perception is that males are more enrolled in higher education (18-24 years age group) as compared to females. In terms of sex, achievement of girls in higher education is considered as reference category. The SCs male students are 2.485*** times more likely to be achieve the higher education as compared to female counterpart.

In a patriarchal society like India, generally father takes major decision regarding family issue. Hence, father’s level of education plays a most important role for allowing to their children in higher education. In case of father’s level of education, junior high school level of father’s education is insignificant which may be case of small number of cases. The students whom fathers’ have high school level of education are 1.87* times more likely to be achieve the higher education as compared to the children of illiterate fathers. The fathers having education of intermediate (10+2) or graduation, their children are 2.63** and 3.29** more likely to be achieve the higher education as compared to the children of illiterate father respectively. The result students whom fathers have post graduate and above level is insignificant which indicates small number of cases.

Regarding availability of educational resource in the household, the students who have chair and table for study are 0.345*** times less likely to be achieve the higher education as compared to the students having separate room for study. This result is significant at one percent level of confidence. The availability of electric lamp and sufficient stationary is not significant which indicates less number of cases. The students who have books for study in higher education are 2.499*** times more likely to be achieve the higher education as compared to the students having separate room for study.

Mode to reach the college is an important factor to determine physical accessibility of higher education especially when college is located far away from residence. The students who go to college by bicycle are 1.728** times more likely to be achieve the higher education as compared to those students who go to college by walk. The students who go to college by public transport are 2.858** times more likely to be achieve the higher education as compared to those students of reference category. The students
who used to motor cycle/bike to go their college are not significant because of small number of samples students and also this result is insignificant.

Working students in higher education indicates that the students are facing money crisis in their household especially in case of SCs. Hence they have become the part of workforce. In this case, the students who do not work for earn money to survive are $1.603^{***}$ times more likely to be achieve the higher education as compared to those students who do the work/jobs.

In the developing countries like India, married person bears several social and economic responsibilities for their family. If married person belongs to weaker socio-economically background then condition becomes more critical to access the higher education. In that condition student have only one choice, either he/she discontinue his/her higher education or bears family responsibilities for fulfill the need the family. In this case, unmarried student are $3.438^{***}$ times more likely to be achieve the higher education compared to married students.

Age at effective marriage is another important factor to determine the accessibility to higher education. Early marriage/early age of effective marriage both is biggest hurdles to access the higher education for socio-economically weaker students. The students whom age at effective marriage is between 18-25 years are $0.258^{**}$ times less likely to be achieve the higher education as compared to those students whose age at effective marriage is below 18 years. The students whom age at effective marriage is more than 25 years are $0.357^{***}$ times less likely to be achieve the higher education as compared to reference category. In both age groups, students have small probability to achieve the higher education which indicates that during married life, circumstances become very critical to achieve the higher education for SCs.

**Discussion**

In Indian society, especially in rural areas, sex is an important factor when time comes to educating the children; generally male children are preferred to allow for higher education which finally widens the gender gap in higher education. Hence, there is significant gender disparity in enrolment of higher education during 2012-13. In general, at the national level, the number of girls enrolled is less than male students. However, the female- male ratio in education has been steadily improving over the years during the 1950-51 to 2012-13 (Renju, 2014). In rural India, there is much higher gender gap exists in enrollment of higher education between men and women. However, the relatively faster growth in women’s enrolment in higher education as compared to men counterparts over the years (Raju, 2008). Chanana has pointed towards the utility of every extra hand for gaining resources. The women are especially subject to the social prejudices in the rural areas. The lack of financial help and incentives at the early age are the other main reasons (Chanana, 1993).

Fathers’ level of education is one of the major influencing factors for achieving higher education because he plays an important role in decision making for his children’s future. In this case, result indicates that there is a positive relation between father’s education and level of achievement in higher education for SCs. In other words, as father’s level of education increases, the probability of their children to go in higher education also increases. Thus, the father’s education and economic condition are most important determining factors in achieving education (Sinha, 1982). The levels of father’s education influence in acquiring higher education. The proportion of students whose fathers were educated up to either graduation or post-graduation is as higher up to more than 50% (Singh, 2007) and on-going relevance of achieved father’s level of education on their child’s self-schema as they transition to higher education (Nelson, 2009). Thus, it may say that the father’s levels of education among the SCs are not much favourable to go their children in higher education.

Availability of educational resource and facilities provides a favourable environment for education in the household. These assets support the student in studies and his/her performance in examination. Regarding availability of educational resource and assets, our results reveals that there is a lack of educational resources i.e. separate room for study, chair and table, electric lamp and sufficiency for higher education. Only books for study are sufficient in the surveyed households. In view of Vimal Shah and Tara Patel, though there is no doubt that there is increase in the educational facilities for the
weaker section of the society, yet there are hidden costs. This may include the purchase of textbooks, travel charges, etc. which are much more expensive that the tuition fee (Shah and Patel, 1979). Therefore, educational resource and facilities are the important determinants for achieving higher education among SCs.

Usually, institutions of higher education are located in towns/urban areas which are far away from rural areas. Analysis of the data reveals that only bicycle and public transport are major means of transportation, while, there is a lack of good and personal mode of transportation to reach the college among SCs students during their higher education. Since majority of the SCs are socio-economically weak backgrounds which did not supports availing the good mode of transport to reach their college. The students who are engaged in part time jobs have their higher education negatively skewed/affected. Excess physical work results in bodily and mental fatigue which affects intellectual pursuits. If a student works physically then his level of learning process and grasping power reduces which negatively affects the education process. The children labour force participation substantially reduces his/her chance of education (Myron, 1996). The SCs have lower enrolment rates than the forward castes because of higher poverty incidence among SCs. The most important determinant of higher education is the economic status of households. Students from family of vulnerable sources of income generally cannot afford to go for higher education firstly because higher education is expensive and secondly, they have to join the workforce to supplement their household income and survive (Dubey, 2008). Workforce participation by SCs students indicates that they are facing money crisis therefore, they works to fulfill their economic needs during higher education.

Usually, married person bear extra responsibilities in the family which is more applicable for SCs because mostly they live in rural areas and still follow the traditional way of life. Hence they get married in an early age and bear extra responsibilities. Resultantly, they get lesser opportunities to achieve the higher education. Second factor is the age at the time of marriage which determines the level of education among SCs. Early marriage is a barrier to education and enjoyment of girl’s human rights. Early marriage is due to various factors including among others, the search for economic survival, protection of young girls, peer group and family pressure, controlling female behaviour and sexuality, and socio-cultural and religious values (Bayisenge, 2002). The early marriage is the key factor for drop out girls in education because decision of marriage and education are negatively related (Nguyen and Wodoni, 2012). The results indicate married students having tendency to discontinue their higher education before completion. In all three groups i.e. married, married between 18-25 year and more than 25 years of age indicates that after marriage, usually they are facing socio-economic problems which encourage them to discontinue their higher education before completion. Thus, it may be said that marriage is one of the most important determining factors to achieving higher education among SCs.

Conclusions

The SCs are considered as one of the most backward community in higher education in the Indian society and the very fact is that proved correct in the light of primary data analysis of socio-economic variables and its impact on their higher education. Data results and analysis revealed that male student; children of fathers having high school or higher secondary school or graduate level of education; household having separate room and books for study, non-working student, family having good transport means and unmarried students have the greater probability to get enrolled and attained the higher education among SCs in the study area. The students from poor, less educated families, female student, married student, working students, the students using walk to reach the college from rural areas having lesser probability to achieving the higher education. However, although these disadvantaged students would be significantly more likely to be achieve the higher education, if government provided proper and effective social welfare schemes to the family of these students. Thus it can be say that the socio-economic condition greatly influence the accessibility and attainment to higher education among the scheduled castes.
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