

## Empowerment of Dalits through Vocational Education and Training



Engineering

KEYWORDS:

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### ABSTRACT

*Human resources are an essential means for achieving economic and social development goals of a nation. Capacity building of human competencies is very important in HRD processes. Capacity-building strategies through education are a critical element of community and individual empowerment.*

*Dalits till today face an overabundance of problems in India. One possible way of improving the situation of Dalits is through economic empowerment. This could be possible through various ways; one reliable method is vocational education and training. In India, the youth either achieve higher academic education or compelled to leave school at an early stage of education and added to the masses of unskilled workers. Only few of this small number of people selects an option between these two boundaries and joins a vocational education institution. Only 5% of the Indian labour force in the 20-24 age group receives formal vocational training; this rate is very less compared with developing countries. In industrialized countries, this indicator ranges between 60 and 90% (Singapore, UK, South Koriya). In the present scenario in India most of workers continue to learn trades on the job from Context often "low-literate and low-skilled ability people". Because of this system in India they adds to masses of lower qualified people and many overqualified professionals whose knowledge is of little utility in the market. Well qualified practitioners are missing. The government of India also recognized this problem and tried to focus more on vocational education and training since the late 1970's. However, progress is slow.*

*This paper is based on information/data provided by Five Year plan documents, Reports of Government committees/commissions, organizational surveys and individual researches.*

### INTRODUCTION

Education, is only promising indicators of human development and a pre-requisite for economic growth, has grown exponentially in India since independence. Indian education system has become the second largest in the world and first in commonwealth countries. Though, the progress achieved so far has not been satisfactory. One-third population in the age group seven and above is still illiterate. Only ten percentage of the population has access to secondary and higher level education. Inter-group and inter-regional educational inequalities still persist. Government of India has taken various measures for the inclusion of excluded Dalits. But these measures appear to be ineffective for educational empowerment of Dalits. Therefore, vocational education and training is one of the way for economical up-liftmen for Dalits. The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (STs) are two groups of historically disadvantaged people recognized in the Constitution of India. During the period of British rule they were known as the dejected classes. According to the 2001 Census, the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes comprise about 16.2 percent and 8.2 percent, respectively, of India's population (about 24.4 percent altogether). This has increased to 16.6 percent and 8.6 percent respectively in 2011. The population of Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) grew by 20.8 % and 23.7 % respectively during the period 2001-2011.

### LITERACY AND LEVEL OF EDUCATION

With respect to education, data revealed that the educational progress of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe populations is quite significant. As per office record of the registrar general & Censes commissioner, in India the total literacy rate for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe 54.7 % and 47.1 % respectively in 2001. While it has increased to 66.1 % and 59 % respectively in 2011 (Table 1).

**Table 1: Literates and Literacy Rate (Persons) India**

Indicator	Literates		Effective Literacy Rate		Percentage Change (2001-2011)
	2001	2011	2001	2011	
<b>Total Population</b>					
Total	56,06,87,797	76,34,98,517	64.8	73.0	8.2

Indicator	Literates		Effective Literacy Rate		Percentage Change (2001-2011)
	2001	2011	2001	2011	
Rural	36,17,36,601	48,26,53,540	58.7	67.8	9.1
Urban	19,89,51,196	28,08,44,977	79.9	84.1	4.2
<b>Scheduled Castes</b>					
Total	7,53,18,285	11,37,59,907	54.7	66.1	11.4
Rural	5,58,06,266	8,20,20,232	51.2	62.8	11.6
Urban	1,95,12,019	3,17,39,675	68.1	76.2	8.1
<b>Scheduled Tribes</b>					
Total	3,23,86,821	5,16,35,423	47.1	59.0	11.9
Rural	2,82,94,749	4,46,31,645	45.0	56.9	11.9
Urban	40,92,072	70,03,778	69.1	76.8	7.7

**Source: Primary Census Abstract for Total population, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, 2011 Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India**

Between 2001 and 2011, literacy rates have improved for girls as well as for overall numbers of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe groups. It may be the peak of higher school participation. The total Male literacy rate for Scheduled Castes during that time increased from 66.6 % to 75.2 % (Table 2, Fig.2, Fig.3 and Fig.4), and for Male Scheduled Tribes it increased from 59.2 % to 68.5 %. The literacy rate, therefore, increased by 12.9 % among the Male Scheduled Caste population and by 15.71 % among the Male Scheduled Tribes, whereas the change to the overall national Male literacy rate is recorded at only 7.43 %. Similarly, the total Female literacy rate for Scheduled Castes during the time period from 2001 to 2011 increased from 41.9 % to 56.5 % and for Female Scheduled Tribes it increased from 34.8 % to 49.4 %. The literacy rate, therefore, increased by 34.84 % among the Female Scheduled Caste population and by 41.95 % among the Female Scheduled Tribes, as compared to an overall national change of 20.52 %.

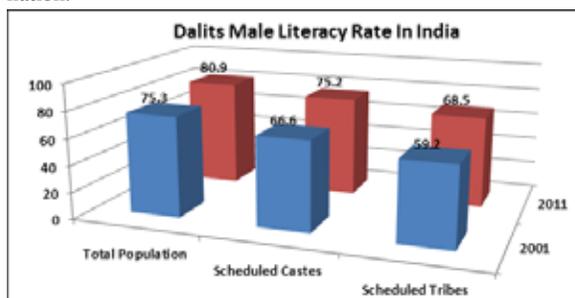
**Table 2: Gender Gap in Literacy Rate**

Indicator	Literacy Rate (Males)		Literacy Rate (Females)		Gender Gap	
	2001	2011	2001	2011	2001	2011
<b>Total Population</b>						
Total	75.3	80.9	53.7	64.6	21.6	16.3
Rural	70.7	77.2	46.1	57.9	24.6	19.3
Urban	86.3	88.8	72.9	79.1	13.4	9.7
<b>Scheduled Castes</b>						
Total	66.6	75.2	41.9	56.5	24.7	18.7
Rural	63.7	72.6	37.8	52.6	25.9	20.0
Urban	77.9	83.3	57.5	68.6	20.4	14.7
<b>Scheduled Tribes</b>						
Total	59.2	68.5	34.8	49.4	24.4	19.1
Rural	57.4	66.8	32.4	46.9	25.0	19.9
Urban	77.8	83.2	59.9	70.3	17.9	12.9

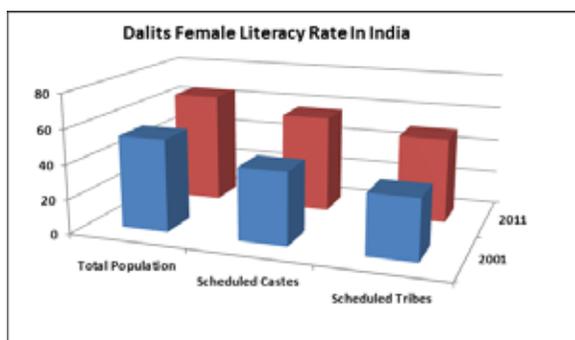
**Source: Primary Census Abstract for Total population, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, 2011 Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India**

Data from Table 2 also reveals a decrease in the literacy gender gap between the general population and the SC and ST population groups. However, there is continues wide gap in literacy rates of rural and urban population.

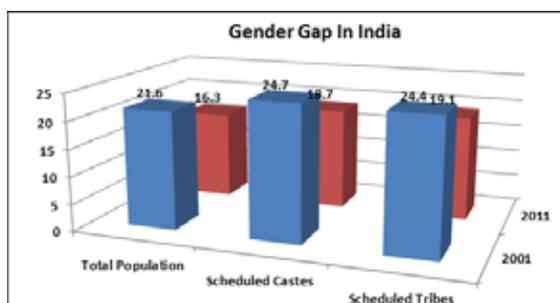
It is a well known fact that 27 % seats are reserved for OBC students, 15 % for the S Cs, and 7.5 % for the STs all over the nation.



**Fig.1**



**Fig.2**



**Fig.3**

But at the same time the school attendance rates among the SCs / STs Student in general and those among rural female in particular are quite unsatisfactory compared to those among the general categories Students in particular. Therefore, relatively low school attendance rates accompanied by high drop-out rates among the SCs/STs Student. Due to that Dalits Students gets fewer opportunities from the various spheres of the society which ultimately result in socio-economic discrimination.

**NEED OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

The lack of success in encouraging education among Dalits at the appropriate level is a great challenge to inclusive policy of the country. Education provides individuals with the means to increase their income and to connect in economic activities. Most of the schemes which the government of India launched for their educational promotion fell short of what was proposed and recommended by High Level Committees/ Commissions. It were not implemented effectively. It is therefore, we propose following measures for the educational promotion of Dalits. Focus should be on to promote access of Dalits to vocational education and training.

**EDUCATION SYSTEM**

A uniform structure of education, the 10+2 schooling system, has been adopted in all Indian states. Variations within the states remain in the number of classes constituting the primary, middle and secondary school stages. In Gujarat for example, the primary stage consists of grade 1 to 4, the middle stage of grade 5 to 7, and the secondary stage of grade 8 to 10. The higher secondary stage (grade 11 and 12) is consistent in all states. Up to the 10<sup>th</sup> grade, students only have to pass internal school examinations which are usually not too difficult. At the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> grade, there are public examinations for all students of all schools organized by the state boards. Many Dalits from government public schools fail these examinations and do not receive any higher educational qualification. They are mostly excluded from further education and converted in to unskilled workforce.

After passing the Secondary School Certificate exams, students have three main further education possibilities:

1. The first option is to join a one to two year vocational training course at a Industrial Training Institute (ITI) or affiliated institutions. Currently, around 10-12% of all graduates of general education schools enter such public or private vocational training institutes.
2. The second option is Students can obtain a three-year technical diploma and eventually become technicians/engineers at a polytechnic.
3. Most of students continue education at a higher secondary school and study for another public exam, the Higher Secondary School Certificate at the end of that. They can choose between academic as well as vocational courses, academic courses being much more popular. This students can join a college and obtain a bachelor degree followed by

a master's degree. All these institutions fall under the regulation by the MHRD.

### PUBLIC VOCATIONAL TRAINING SYSTEM

Although there are some exceptions, in general, India's public vocational training system is an institutional system. First, people are trained in full-time training institutions and then they try to find a job on the market. It is not a dual training system as found in many industrialized countries, where one part of the training takes place directly on the job in a company and the other part is given in a training centre. India's government training system is rather complex. There are seventeen different ministries or departments which fund or provide vocational education and training programmes. The individual programmes very much differ with each other in time period, curriculum, target groups, entry qualifications etc. Six ministries/departments offer formal vocational training programmes for literate school-leavers, whereas only two offer a sizable number of courses; they form the backbone of vocational training in the nation.

1. **Vocationalisation of Secondary Education:** From the late 1970's, vocational training courses have been introduced to higher secondary schools to offer an substitute to traditional academic higher secondary education courses. However, as per reports of the Planning Commission, the scheme of vocationalisation of H.S.C education was not very successful in Country. Students prefer the traditional courses mentioned above only 10% of students are opting for the vocational stream, whereas 500 millions were set as a target to be reached by 2020. The vocational courses are also not popular because they lack institute industry interlinkages, and the educated skills are not fulfils demand of local industries as well as, there are various academic constraints which reduce their reputation.
2. **Industrial Training Institutes:** The mentioned vocational training system under the supervision of the Ministry of Labour (Industrial Training Institutes, ITIs & Industrial Training Centre, ITCs) is more established and more important in terms of persons trained. This system was introduced in 1953. About 60% of school drop outs attending a vocational school are trained in one of the ITIs or other affiliated private institutes called Industrial Training Centres (ITCs). There are about 9447 training institutes with a total of 1335488 training capacity as on 24/02/2012 under the supervision of the Ministry of Labour. These institutes mainly offer one to three year courses with a main focus in the manufacturing sector. The ITIs face about the same problems as the vocational courses offered at higher secondary education level. The missing linkages of the institutes to the local market are a considerable drawback, as there is a huge mismatch between demand and supply of skilled manpower. The main problem of both formal vocational training systems is that they offer relatively long (1 to 3 years) courses geared to jobs and employment possibilities in the organized sector. However, only 7% of India's workforce is eventually engaged in this sector. The remaining 93% of the Indian workforce is employed in the unorganized sector, so it is no surprise that many of the graduates who were trained in jobs in the organized sector are not successful in finding employment. There is also no focus on teaching skills that would enable people to become self-employed. The training programmes are designed centrally and do not match the local demand for skills also its curriculum are not updated regularly. As the allocation of fund from government is very low, there is also an insufficient support for equipment, material and new training courses to meet industrial challenges. Moreover, there is usually a minimum educational entry requirement of a 10<sup>th</sup> grade pass outs.

The central government realized the serious drawbacks of its vocational training systems and revised their schemes. A greater flexibility, mobility and closer linkages with the industry which, should ensure more effective skill development and employment potential. Further, new and more important thing is that shorter courses of MES types as specially geared the informal market are being introduced. However, this is always easier said than done because the proper implementation of such programmes in all the states of country is remains the crucial part.

### VOCATIONAL TRAINING: DALIT INITIATIVES

There are some government training institutes entirely for women, but there are no such institutes exclusively for Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes. Like in other educational institutions, a number of seats are reserved for Scs and Sts. Sometimes, they are also entitled to a special discount on the training fees, or other assistance is granted to encourage the deprived sections to take up education. However, after the training they have to compete with all other castes for job vacancies in the private market. Affirmative action for SCs/STs exists only for the few government jobs. Due to the generally low labour market success of the government vocational training courses, graduated Dalits from such courses carry a double burden: Firstly, Non-Dalits are mostly preferred over Dalits, even if both have the same educational background. Discrimination of Dalits in the labour market is common. Secondly, youth from castes that have been involved in production or trading of certain goods for generations often find a decent job through relations, or they start working in the family business. Dalits cannot rely on such caste/family networks as their relatives usually only have low-status jobs and no bargaining power to secure them a good post. Self-employment could be a possibility to overcome this dependency on other people, but besides not being prepared for such an undertaking by government training institutes, Dalits rarely have enough venture capital to start an own business.

As a result of the bad performance or absence of government (vocational) education, thousands of NGOs have started to work in the education and development sector of India. While many stay clear from caste related issues, there are some which focus on Dalits and in particular on Dalit education. Unfortunately, the situation in the NGO sector is even more complex than in the public sector as there are innumerable different educational and development programmes. However, it applies to both the Indian NGO sector and the government that usually no proper monitoring and evaluation of the programmes are carried out. This also holds true for vocational training programmes and for programmes aimed at Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. On the government side, there is one outstanding exception is that, an efficiency study report of government Industrial Training Institutes from the International Labour Organization. Although it does not focus particularly on Dalit vocational education and training but it offers valuable insights.

### SUGGESTIONS

Enhancing the employability of the deprived and rural poor, in particular Dalits, is a prerequisite for mitigating the risk of further poverty and socio-economic impact.

To address the barriers which stop learners from disadvantaged groups taking up vocational education and training, the following measures may be adopted from a policy perspective:

- Introducing special mechanisms in the delivery of training to increase participation by Dalits, including mobile training units, extension schemes, and in-plant training;
- Monitoring progress in increasing the participation and integration of Dalits in training and employment and holding training institutions accountable for equitable intake of Dalits;

- Expanding significantly the training provision for Dalits, young women and men and vulnerable groups in poor rural Dalits areas. This could be achieved through greater equitable
- Integration into existing institutions, structures and facilities for Dalits;
- Promoting training in non-traditional fields for Dalits women through the establishment of specific training programmes and pilot support schemes;
- Training programmes for Dalits and for their women could include personal development and life skills training modules and literacy training;
- Increasing the pool of Dalits trainers and provide certification for training;
- Designing targeted interventions to address vulnerable groups such as people with Dalits, to increase their economic empowerment;
- Introducing more work-based learning and linking trainees with mentors/masters to gain experience of a specific trade;
- Integrating business, self-employment and entrepreneurial concepts into training activities, especially in follow-up phases, and search for trainers with relevant backgrounds and familiarity with both the formal and informal sector.

### CONCLUSION

It is highly required to promote modernization of traditional craft and employment among Dalits. Schools, which may be called Learning with self earning, may be opened in Dalits' concentration vicinities. These schools would certainly attract children of poor families which, instead of enrolling their children in schools, prefer to send them for either earning or learning some craft. It is also necessary to constantly monitor the dropout rates for students belonging to SC and ST and see the reasons. Reservation of Dalits in admission to Government ITIs should be made effective and practical. Government should give priority to establish vocational educational and training institution like ITIs ,VTIs ,Polytechnics in each Dalits concentrated vicinity. The private sector reservation policy can be thought off by government.

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