

Educational aspirations and expectations among scheduled caste students: a study of Uttar Pradesh, India

Abstract

Man is the only being who needs education to growth, knowledge for development, culture to learn social norms and religion to follow. It has been considered that one generation educates the next, and to accomplish desired goal “guidance” plays an important role to succeed in life. Guidance means directing the child in putting into practice what he has been taught. Education means to nurture about discipline and teaching together with culture. As the animal use their powers as soon as they are possessed of them, according to a regular plan discipline changes animal nature into human nature. So if we look it into other way the difference between a private teacher who merely instructs and a tutor who guides and directs his child the one trains for school only; while the other for life. As the child grows and develops in real world he started making his/her limited area to learn and knowledge, and in this limited area everyone has their own aspirations in life professional and educationally. The article will focus on the aspirations development of 10th and 12th standard students studying in Government schools. It will also focus the challenges and obstacle they face in achieving aspirations.¹

Keywords: education, aspirations, guidance, development, school

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Introduction

India is a country where people living together with variations such as rural urban, male female, and caste to caste variations and within these variations we need to be active in terms of employment and work with dignity. To fulfill these gaps there “education” plays an important role to achieve a respected and dignified life. After completing 70 years of independence and having experimented with special welfare programs for these sections, it is high time to assess achievements in the field of education. Considering the key role of education as an agent of change, it is worth seeing educational achievements among deprived sections like Scheduled Caste, Schedule Tribe and women. From centuries our government has restricted their analysis of the educational situation to the scheduled castes. In India the Scheduled Caste category have been the last on the hierarchical ladder of the society’s structure. Education and desired education achievement is a challenge itself to the lower middle and middle class category in India. The list of reasons for them and their family are many and varied. From an economic angle; they suffer from low income, low productivity, low wages, conditions of work often onerous and employment not permanent. The standard of living which their earnings permit is miserably low and their daily lives reflect a phenomenon of large scale of underemployment and the problem of surplus population on land. They are asset less, unskilled and having high dependency ratio. The scope for any business in their place of living (in terms of petty shop or hotel or any other service activity) is limited. From political angle they are not allow to represent frontline leader even government provision of Caste representation at various level. From social angle they are repressed by the Verna system and scared to initiate the positive attitude. As a result of all these factors, the student from this category would not in a position to get desired achievement because he/she also has to contribute to nurture his family to fulfill their actual need. They can hardly think of any comfort or luxury. Their basic necessities of life are often left unfulfilled. Within this mishmash they unable to develop their aspirations for life and career

therefore they started following the family occupations and ordinary work to survive.

The aspiration of a child is to achieve a desired goal with full enthusiasm. It could be of studying a particular stream or to choose a particular profession. The child inspires to see the limited environment available near him. This process takes a long way to go with dedication and punctuality. The process requires timely guidance, counseling, support of family & environment. Some of the tradition believes that education starts form mother’s womb. The activity and behavior performed by the parents teaches itself to a child and it’s proven psychologically. The education from the family and surrounding develops the needs and requirement for a child. Everything he asked for, would surely he learns from the family and environment. There are varieties within members in the family who creates an environment and tried to educate the child from their experiences and learning’s. The right to education act came into force in 2010; however, the trend towards universal elementary education was well in place before that. The acts provides the compulsory education for the age group 6-14, enrolment levels have been high and rising. The increasing demand of English education initiated to increase a casteless and classless society. Before independence, the progress of primary education was very limited due to structural, social economy. According to the report released by (ASER) Annual Status of Educational Repot,¹ enrollment in Standard VIII almost doubled in the decade between 2004-05 and 2014-15, from 11 million to almost 22 million. With this data the census 2011, one out of every ten Indians is currently in the age bracket of 14-18. 86% of youth age group 14-18 is in the formal education system today. Now the problem not seems in the enrollment but somewhere it diverts the way of education and questions its quality. The implementation of the policy and programs is in alarming condition within county, the quality is compromised in many ways. The statistical data looks impressive when we look into enrolment but in country like India we just not to only look into quantity and lastly the quality should

be in priority. The diversion of forms took different shape today especially in government funded schools. It has seen that the pressure on students of examination of good performances push them from schools. A student can be pushed when adverse situations within the school environment lead to consequences, ultimately resulting in dropout. This includes testes, attendance and discipline policies, and even consequences of poor behavior. Student can be pulled out when factors inside the student divert them from completing schools. These situations occur when factors such as financial worries, out of school employment, family needs, or even family changes, such as marriage of childbirth pull students away from schools. There would be illness and caste discrimination also can play their role.

There are 4 fold of Caste in the Education system showing how much of hierarchical category the government made to implement. The researcher chooses the last ladder within.

- A. Elite Private Schools
- B. KVs and Navodaya Vidyalaya
- C. Ashram schools, Welfare schools, Residential schools etc.
- D. General Government Schools

The present system of education is also seems so limited and inherently unequal then why not the other one pulled away for unequal opportunities (Dalit rights and Democracy workshop organized by Council for Social Development, Delhi from 28 august to 1st September, 2017). The rate of unemployment is increasing day by day and among the people from Scheduled Caste is also very huge. The problem faced by the student who came from the "Hindi medium" background is unlikely more than the private schools and English medium comparatively. The proper guidance to these children is less due to various factors existed in the family and society so the researcher wants to describe the problem and wants to explore the generational factors to achieve aspirations.

Indian school education scenario at a glance

Indian education system is one of the largest education systems in the world. According to HDI (Human Development Index- 2017), India stands at the 131st position out of 188 countries in HDI in literacy and enrolment. Out of the total 74.04 % literates in the country, 65.46 % are women while 82.14% are men. The literacy rate for SCs in 2011 was below the national average, at 66.1 per cent. In 2012–13, the drop in enrolment of SC children from the primary (classes I–V) to upper primary (classes V–VII) level was 54.4 %, compared to an overall dropout rate of 51.8 per cent. The participation of the children from Schedule Caste in various activities found very low in schools. According to ASER,¹ only 54% within these are enrolled in standard 10th and 25% are either in 11th or 12th and only 6% are enrolled in undergraduate and other degree or diploma courses. There are hardly any differences between boys and girls at the enrollment age at 14 but at age 18, 32% females are not enrolled as compared to 28% males. Gender gap seen everywhere in the country except some of the states but within Schedule Caste it is still huge and very gradually improving. 40% youth did not have any role models for the profession they aspired to. The substantial proportions of youth in the 14–18 age groups are working (42%). Of those who work, 79% work in agriculture almost all on their own family's farm; also more than 3 quarters of all youth do household work daily 77% of males and 89% of females.¹

According to (ASER) Annual Status of Educational Report (2017), 25% of the age group (7–16) still cannot read basic text fluently in their own mother language. After Nehru intervention in language

provision in 1964 the primary education will be taught in mother language. More than half struggle with division and only 43% are able to do basic calculation correctly. 53% of all the 14 year old students in the sample can read English sentences and for 18 years old this figure is closer to 60%. Among this age group of students who can read sentences only 79% can say meaning of the sentence. The reading habit does not impressive at all at primary level. What do we know about the basic capabilities of those who have completed eight years of schooling? For over a decade, the ASER reports have been pointing out that foundational skills like reading an basic arithmetic even at the point of completion of elementary school are worrying low, about a quarter of all children in class 8 struggle with reading simple texts and more than half are still unable to do basic arithmetic operations like division and multiply. The survey conducted by ASER within various states like Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan etc. What does all this empirical evidence pointing to? At the time of secondary and senior secondary the student completed 10th and 12th standard the student undecided to what further course he or she should peruse. As a developing nation we need to be ready for a new generation of young people. Every year we will be "graduating" cohort of close to 25 million young and hopeful boys and girls from elementary school. They can't enter the work force at least in the organized sector until they are 18. For many families these children are the first from their families ever to get this far in school. On the one hand aspirations run high parents and children expect that such "graduates" from school will go on to high school and college. Hardly anyone wants to go back to agriculture or their paternal work where their parents many have spent their entire working life.¹

The time from 8th to 12th grade has generally been considered an important transitional period for adolescents, because of their desire for autonomy and independence and their gradual detachment from their families. These important developmental changes in adolescents may make observing consistent findings about the effect of parental involvement on students' academic outcomes more difficult. There is still time to think on the side of provision; there are ongoing moves to universalize secondary schooling. There are serious efforts to expand skilling opportunities. But as a Nation we need to know not only prepare this generation for learning and knowledge but also what the young people are aspiring to do and aligning abilities and achievements with aspirations. Forging promising alternative new pathways forward is critical not only for youth but for the country as well. Educational aspirations are not only regulated by external influences or by saying anyone or motivating but it is extensively motivated by self influence. Yes it is true that we can influence by seeing others but the inherently motivation should be first in place. The aspiration influence itself resulted from observation, environment and social norms. It's inherent in nature but at some level it is influent by the motivator which seems missing in disadvantaged groups such as scheduled castes and Tribes. There are enough constitutional provisions and legislation to promote education besides these there are number of people belonging to these groups are way behind in employment and work with dignity. They are somewhere remaining far from that desired end which they wish to achieve. While aspirations may be concrete or enthusiasm, the essence of the idea is that desired future events will direct and motivate effort in the present and thereby increase student's chances to succeed in the educational system.²

Objectives of the study

- a. To study the educational aspirations among the students from the Scheduled Caste background.

- b. To understand various factors that affect educational aspirations among the students from this category.
- c. To provide suggestive social work response for improving the quality educational and skills to achieve aspirations.

Research methodology

The research was conducted in Baphpat district Uttar Pradesh. There were five government school were selected through stratified random sampling within the proportion of 10:10 boys and girls. The parents of selected respondents were also interviewed to fulfil the objectives to know about generational effect in developing and achieving aspirations. The researcher also included the Principal of selected schools and take up suggestions of expert in this field.

Theoretical framework

The present study retrieves its theoretical understanding from the ecological systems theory which proposes that individuals interacts within social contexts of family, peers, school community and cultural constellation in complex, reciprocal relationships.

Cultural theories

Every different culture creates a human being for good and bad. Culture beliefs, practices and material objects that are created and shared within a group of people, thus consisting their way of life.

Functional theories

Functionalism attempts to understand how all parts of a society (for example, institutions such as family, education, economy and the policy or state) fit together to form a smoothly running social system. The part of the society tends to complement each other to create social stability.³⁻⁵

Theory of status attainment

There are different theoretical perspectives on the interpretation of educational aspirations and their significance for the future behaviour. The dominant model is the sociological theory of status attainment, which stresses aspirations as a cognitive state that motivates young people to strive for academic success. This model recognizes that both personal dimension (impact of significant others or students' perception of their own personal attributes) and social dimensions (quality of schooling or parental social class) are important transmitting factors. Parents, in particular, have been seen as the most significant others in shaping aspirations because they provide the opportunities, encouragement and support for their children's learning.^{6,7}

Findings and discussion

The study has one major aims was to study educational aspirations among the students from Scheduled Caste category. In previous studies the condition of Scheduled Caste student in education, factor and challenges in education studied by many authors but this field required more concern relating to the present scenario of education and increasing number of educated unemployment. In previous chapter we discussed about the factor affecting in the development of aspirations and its attainment which describes the challenges are more than the opportunities for person related to Schedule Caste background. Professional aspirations play an important role in motivating and guiding student to choose their profession according to their interest and desire. If the parents are not capable enough to guide their child in difficulties then the teacher should play to role

of counselor or a mentor to a child. In this research the students and parents were asked about their aspirations in life and how they approach to accomplish those aspirations? 50% of students were not able to decide their educational and professional aspirations. What stream they choose? And has a very limited scope in their sphere. Though the assumption made by the researcher was seems false to see these observation that not all students in high school fixed their aspirations.

The interaction between the child and parents has been observed very low due to tight schedule of father and age differences. About 60% of parents did not ask ever to their child for their interest in terms favorite subjects, what you want to be in life, what you aspire to do etc. As the data collection indicates that there are number of children who did not get any academic help ever from their parents and lack of proper guidance disturbed their life which leads to stress. The reason for these situations of most family is that there are the students who studying in 10th and 12th standard are 1st generation who reached at that level. There are some of the major findings emerged through the efforts of researcher to use data collection tools such as Interview, observation, and FGD with student, parents and school principles. One of the major findings the researcher found that the size of the family of Scheduled Caste background was very large. The parents in the wish of having more boys in family did not capable enough for family planning. The parent wishes to have a boy even after three or four girls' child. Due to financial imbalance within family the parents did not want to abort the child. There were number of parents who said that all the girls in family considered the gift of god and if god has given that gift, we shall happily accept it but we wished to have another boy within family. The large number of students did not decide their child's educational aspirations even after 12th standard. The students who were in the 10th standard were not able to decide their further pursuing stream. Another most noticed finding from the respondents and schools that the school did not performing their role in choosing stream at 10th and 12th level, fails to provide a handholding support the students from this category. The class teacher left them on their own world and do not want to change the traditional pattern of pedagogy through this rigidity the child faces lack of current knowledge and awareness.⁸⁻¹²

Another most important finding has been noticed while interviewing with the students and parents emerged that the conversation among parents and students were very less in choosing educational and professional career. Most of the parents did not know about their child's stream related courses available nearby. Thus, it can be said that the approach to fulfill one's aspirations is just giving economic support from the family. The level of mother's education found very low though their contribution in child's academic career is nominal. The gender biasness was there within the community of Scheduled Caste. The study reveals that girls were not provided the tuitions in comparison to boys. The aspirations of girls chosen conditionally based on character and its stick to the teacher only. Through the in-depth interview and non participant observation the researcher found that the local level role model also plays an important role in developing aspirations and its lacking. Educated unemployment notion in recent days decrease their professional aspirations which starts through educational aspirations. There were lots of unemployed young person struggling to get dignified job and its need to be change.¹³⁻¹⁹

The traditional pattern of generational profession found changed and improved. Now the workable choice provided to the children. The previous generation did not helped a child to pursue a particular

stream or they do not capable enough educationally and economically to provide them the 'choice' or guiding them properly. In the family the higher education holder were very less thus the parent did not have the option to refer for point guidance. The alienation of Internet and information technology was seen within this community. The competition in market has gone high after internet revolution and this revolution the children from Schedule Caste category legs behind. The family who has government jobs is the only family who getting government job because they equipped with proper guidance. A class teacher is responsible to keep eye on all students; the class teacher should provide a space to ask doubts and clarification regarding academic issue and provide guidance. Students from Scheduled Caste category did not utilize their class teacher hours and raising and asking questions in classroom found very low. Apart from attendance the other discussion never takes place.

The role of the schools

In the school context, the teacher should take up the following responsibilities in relation to children from the scheduled castes category to achieve his/her aspirations:-

The school should ensure that the all children especially from Schedule Caste feel safe and accepted in the classroom without discrimination.

I. The school should come up with a non-discriminatory seating arrangement in the classroom and also should ensure about the student from Scheduled Caste category taking actively part in the group task and presentation.

II. The teacher should ensure that the student from Schedule Caste category rising questions within classroom and listening actively.

III. The teacher should evaluate individual to find out the interesting areas of study and guide for the future course option accordingly.

IV. The school should ensure the participation within extracurricular activity of the children from Schedule Caste and motivate them to take part.

V. The school should identify the children from special need and continuously bad performed child through class test and other evaluative methods.

VI. The school should carefully prepare all students for exams and healthy athletic competitions without pressure.

VII. The teacher should encourage interaction between all students (including Scheduled Castes) and the parents.

VIII. In view of the discriminatory practices against SC students in schools (observed and analyzed from the study) the sensitization of teachers to the harm of such mistreatment and exclusion becomes particularly important. It is hence necessary that all teachers not only be made aware of the ways discrimination may occur and also that they make a conscious effort to stop such behavior. However, a teacher's role goes beyond mere regulation of personal behavior. In addition, teachers also have a responsibility to make SC students aware of their rights and encourage all students to express themselves freely and develop their skills apart from their syllabus based education.

Social work intervention in school

- To enable individuals, families and schools to perform along with current competition.
- To provide information relevant to the resources needed in to aspire for realistic goals.

- At the time of 10th and 12th level the selection of stream should given pre counseling and proper future prospects for that stream.
- To enable the student's and their parents according to their socio-economic condition for local opportunities.
- To provide guidance and models this is conducive to enabling the other tasks to be carried out.
- To overcomes far as possible any gross deficiencies in development which may hinder social functioning
- To act as an agent within society to as to promote a fairer distribution of the resources needed in order to allow individuals, families and groups to subscribed to the dominant cultures and values of society.

Role of parents

- To teach specific cognitive skills such as reading, writing if possible and ensure their school activity such as school homework, participation in extracurricular activity etc.
- To regular contact with the class teacher and school visits to engage with child.
- To control the child and know his/her peer group within school and environment.
- To provide proper guidance and if not possible to provide by the school the school should refer to the concerned person.
- To provide an atmosphere that is conducive to study at home peacefully.
- To give time to the child and plan together what could be the better option for career.
- The parent should not pressurize the child to earn at early age.
- The parent should aware about the available program and policies to related category for better development.

The need and expectation or achieving aspirations model

The researcher has made an attempt to analyze information which reveals from the respondent. The researcher has explored the parent's opinion and situation towards the attainment of aspirations of a child in family. Added to this also take up interviews with Principal of schools and government officials. To sum up with finding the researcher developed a model to achieve the aspirations of children especially for Schedule Caste. This modal suggested by the researcher, if the child has provided all these aspects in life he may be possibly accomplish his desired goal within limited timeframe. The model explains in four terms i.e. Child needs, Protective needs, Learning outcome and Attaining aspirations (Figure 1).

The child needs

The children within society need a Safe & equitable environment to grow fearlessly and develop social, psychological and environmentally. The child needs a handholding support from the prime institutions i.e. family to encourage, to think positive, to get economical, social and psychological support when the development allows. For the positive progress he/she needs the resources by the family, institutions, government to encourage so that he/she can achieve the desired goal and live with dignity. Proper guidance and counseling plays a major role in shaping the world of a child. If she/he gets it on time the result would be expected in the competition world.

Protective factors

For the development and progress of a child there are mainly four

terms in which he/she should require support which are School, home, community and peer. These four institutions provide the power and support to have a bright future for a child. The child requires safe and equal competition within school, guidance, motivation and caring relationship from home and school both. The children needs a healthy mind and caring relationship to think and work positively, he/she should be aware about healthy competition and encouraged. The peer can be good learner and good example to strengthen the ability and support.



Figure 1 The need and expectation or achieving aspirations model.

Learning outcomes

Through the above mentions indicators the child could be lead to have a good communication skill and started getting co-operation from the society. The child would be stronger to solve the problem in difficult circumstance. The child would become more potential to choose the desired goal and started to make effort towards set goals.

Attainment of aspirations

The final stage within the model reflect its expected outcomes to get the awareness about basic competition through which the attainment of Educational and Occupational aspirations would fulfilled and they will become more responsible towards educational and occupational career.²⁰⁻²²

Conclusion

The education system denies the existence of conflict of class interests, class relations with the world and deviates comfortably from the rhythm of reality'. In India the increasing demand of privatization of schools and decline in the public funds on one hand and rapid speed of universalization of education on the other through various programs nowhere reflect the importance of quality education or needful education. There are such areas where the unavailability of school became social issue or poor quality of schools within there at

schools. There are many children who can't even read and write after completing 8th class. There is the provision of not failing the student till 9th standard seems diverting the interest for further development of a child. Thus, through the findings it can be said that the quality education within government school are still the major concerns because every year the number of employment is increasing. We are focusing on the quantity rather than quality. For the development of a society we need to think along with the left category. The inclusive development will be possible only when we would think according to the perspectives of the unreached community. And the education should not be only for increasing literacy rate but for getting a dignified employment for sustainable development.

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Conflict of interest

Author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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