

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

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The Context

In the early Vedic Period, Indian society was casteless in the sense that all types of work was done by each and everybody according to their potentialities. Every member of the family was at liberty to adopt any profession he liked without any reservation. Born of the same parents, one son used to tend the cattle and till the soil; the second son, having perhaps mercantile bias, carried on trade and commerce; the third one, being of an enterprising nature, defended his hearth and home against aggressors and maintained peace and order of the country; and again the fourth son, gifted with intellectual and spiritual dispositions, pursued the priestly profession (Ministry of Home Affairs, 1975).

This arrangement was possible only in a very simple society where population needs and the resources were extremely limited. With the increased population and growing complexity of the society in course of time, the concept of qualities (gunas) and action (kama) was injected into

the social system in the form of Chaturvarna (Four Castes) Brahamanas, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra (MHA 1956). To start with, the system in Vedic times worked very well, because there was no discrimination on the basis of the occupation. All men were equal, there was no trace of untouchability. No man was considered too high and no man too low as envisaged in the Rig Veda. Every member of community ate and drank with others as envisaged in the Atharva Veda. The community was bound by a feeling of brotherhood and the earth was treated as the mother to all.

With the passage of time, however, the system degenerated into caste rigidities and the shudras were pushed to the lowest rung of the caste hierarchy. A time came when they became untouchables. After sometime, shudras came to be known as depressed class. The term 'Scheduled Caste' appeared for the first time in the Government of India Act, 1935. In April, 1936, specifying certain castes, races and tribes as scheduled castes in the then provinces of Assam, Bengal, Bihar, Bombay, Central Provinces and Berar, Madras, Orissa, Punjab and United Provinces. The list drawn in 1950 was a revised version of the list of scheduled castes under the Government of India (Scheduled Caste) Order, 1936 (M.H.A 1975). After pushing Shudras to lowest rung, the avenues of education and socio-economic viability were completely closed for them. As a consequence, people belonging to these castes

faced socio-economic insecurity. Their condition need not be described in detail here as it has been most talked about area with the start of the period of social reform.

According to 1971 Census, the population of Scheduled Castes was 8.25 crores forming 15.04 percent of total population of the country. The large chunk of population remained backward and illiterate since ages due to historical reasons. No wonder, therefore, they still constitute one of the weakest sections of our population. During the decade 1961-71, as against all India literacy rates of 39.5 and 18.7 for males and females, the literacy percentage among the scheduled castes was only 22.4 percent for males and 6.5 for females.

Several efforts were made to ameliorate the conditions of scheduled castes. The authors of the constitution of India envisaged ample safeguards for the scheduled castes. Article 46 of the Constitution states : '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 fulfil the constitutional obligations regarding scheduled castes, the Government of India have made liberal allocations of

funds in the National Five Year Plans for the welfare schemes.

The Central Government and most of the state governments have planned and presented meaningful programmes and schemes for the educational uplift of the scheduled castes since it is felt that education will improve their socio-economic lot. Some of the schemes towards this end are : Incentives like free supply of books, stationery, dress, mid-day meals etc.; pre-matric scholarships, post-matric scholarships; technical education; overseas scholarships; hostels; residential schools; special incentives for girls' education; reservation for scheduled castes children in Sainik Schools, I.T.I's and other educational institutions; and coaching and vocational guidance at various levels.

Despite efforts by the Union and the state governments for encouraging education, the educational progress of scheduled castes, is far from satisfactory. There is wide gap in the literacy rate as well as in the enrolment in scheduled caste and non-scheduled caste population (M.H.A., 1977). Goyal (1974), Singh and Others (1974); and Desai and Pandor (1974) also point to the prevalent disparity between scheduled castes and general castes.

The slow progress in the education of scheduled castes as reflected in low enrolment ratio and literacy rate despite various efforts of the government for

accelerating the pace of their educational progress raises several pertinent questions. Are the scheduled castes aware of the facilities provided by the government under different schemes ? If not why ? If yes, are they utilising these facilities properly ? If they are not utilising the facilities properly, is there something wrong with the schemes themselves or are they precluded by some other causes ? What can be done to improve the functional effectiveness of the schemes ? Objective assessment of the existing position based on scientifically collected data are essential for securing answers to the questions posed above. It is further desirable to study the problem in the context of a limited area. The Union Territory of Delhi where educational facilities are more can provide a viable area for study. It is for this purpose, the present study was planned.

The Problem

The specific problem can be stated as 'A Study of the Scheduled Castes' Awareness about the Schemes for Their Educational Progress'.

Objectives

The specific objectives of the study can be stated as under :

1. To identify the educational schemes for facilitating education of the children belonging to scheduled castes.

2. To study the awareness of students and heads of family regarding the educational schemes for facilitating education of the children belonging to scheduled castes.
3. To study the sources of awareness about the educational schemes for facilitating education of children belonging to scheduled castes.
4. To study the antecedent variables of the awareness level of the heads of family regarding the educational schemes for facilitating education of the children belonging to scheduled castes.
5. To study the relationship between the awareness of heads of family about educational schemes and their utilisation by children belonging to scheduled castes.
6. To study the relationship between awareness of heads of family about educational schemes and the dropout rate of children belonging to scheduled castes.
7. To study the relationship between awareness of scheduled caste heads of family about educational schemes and their attending children.
8. To study the relationship between awareness of scheduled caste heads of family about educational schemes and their non-attending children.
9. To study the relationship between awareness of scheduled castes heads of family about educational schemes and their out-of-school children.
10. To study the problems faced by the scheduled castes in the utilisation of educational schemes for facilitating education of their children.

11. To identify the directions for procedural modification with a view to facilitating utilisation of the educational schemes by the children belonging to scheduled castes with particular reference to the conditions of eligibility, value of scholarships, awards of schemes, duration and renewal of awards, mode of payment, mode of publicity and submitting application.

Hypotheses

In order to realise the objectives of the study outlined above, the following null hypotheses were formulated:

- Ho₁ There is no significant difference in the awareness of educational schemes among urban, semi-urban and rural heads of family belonging to scheduled castes.
- Ho₂ There is no significant difference in the awareness of educational schemes among urban, semi-urban and rural students belonging to scheduled caste.
- Ho₃ There is no significant difference in the awareness of educational schemes among urban, semi-urban and rural male students belonging to scheduled castes.
- Ho₄ There is no significant difference in the awareness of educational schemes among urban, semi-urban and rural female students belonging to scheduled castes.
- Ho₅ There is no significant difference in the awareness of educational schemes between male and female students belonging to scheduled castes.
- Ho₆ Awareness of the heads of family about educational schemes and the caste within scheduled castes to which they belong are independent of each other.
- Ho₇ Awareness of students about educational schemes and the caste within scheduled castes to which they belong are independent of each other.

- Ho₈ Awareness of heads of family and students about schemes for their educational progress belonging to scheduled castes are not significantly related.
- Ho₉ There is no significant difference in the yearly income of the heads of family in rural, semi-urban and urban areas.
- Ho₁₀ There is no significant difference in the per capita income of the families belonging to scheduled castes in rural, semi-rural and urban areas.
- Ho₁₁ Awareness of heads of family about educational schemes and yearly income of the heads of family belonging to scheduled castes are not significantly related.
- Ho₁₂ Awareness of heads of family about educational schemes and per capita income of the family belonging to scheduled castes are not significantly related.
- Ho₁₃ The educational level of the heads of family and locations they belong to are independent of each other.
- Ho₁₄ Awareness of heads of family about educational schemes and educational level of the heads of family belonging to scheduled castes are independent of each other.
- Ho₁₅ The occupational level of the scheduled caste heads of family and the location areas are independent of each other.
- Ho₁₆ Awareness of heads of the family about educational schemes and their occupational level are independent of each other.
- Ho₁₇ Awareness of the heads of the family about the educational schemes and the utilisation of educational schemes by their wards are independent of each other.

- H₁₈ Awareness of heads of family about educational schemes and attending children are independent of each other.
- H₁₉ Awareness of heads of family about educational schemes and dropout rate of children are independent of each other.
- H₂₀ Awareness of heads of family about educational schemes and non-attending children are independent of each other.
- H₂₁ Awareness of heads of family about educational schemes and rate of out of school children are independent of each other.

Procedure

Population in the case of the present study has been defined as people belonging to scheduled castes, the Union territory of Delhi, The unit of the sample was family. One hundred families from selected rural, semi-urban and urban areas of Delhi were covered. At the first stage of selection of locations, the locations having concentration of scheduled caste population were selected. From these locations, families were selected randomly.

Two questionnaires and an Awareness level scoring key (ALSK) were developed for the collection of data for the study. The first questionnaire purporated to collect information from scheduled caste heads of family and the second one from the students. An Awareness Level Scoring Key

was meant for assessing awareness of both heads of family and the students.

The data were collected during field work through administering the questionnaires to heads of the families and students covered in the study. The investigator filled in the questionnaires through interview from the illiterate heads of the family and from those who were literate upto primary stage. The questionnaires of students were filled in by the investigator through interview at the primary stage and beyond the primary stage questionnaires were filled in by the students themselves.

In order to test the hypothesis relating to awareness, t-test, chi-square and product moment coefficient of correlation were computed. To analyse data regarding problems and suggestions, the percentages were calculated.

Findings

The significant findings emerging from the study are given below :

Sources of Awareness :

School is the major source of awareness of the heads of the family about educational schemes, since more than fifty percent respondents have indicated this source. Only a quarter of them consider newspaper as the source, while a few consider neighbour's children, the notice board in

schools and colleges, teachers, friends and relatives to be the sources of their awareness.

Antecedents of Awareness :

- (1) The awareness level of heads of the family tends to differ in different location areas. The urban heads of family have higher level of awareness about educational schemes than heads of the family in semi-urban and rural areas.
- (2) The trend in the awareness level of students about the educational scheme follows the trend in the awareness level of heads of the family. The students in the urban areas have higher awareness than those in semi-urban and rural areas.
- (3) When viewed sex-wise, awareness level of the urban male students is higher than that of the rural male students. The differences, however, were significant between urban and rural students on awareness about schemes only.
- (4) Awareness level of the urban female students is significantly higher than that of the rural female students. The awareness level of the semi-urban female student was also significantly higher than that of rural female students; while the difference between the awareness level of the urban and semi-urban female students is not found to be significant.

- (5) Taking the total sample of students, awareness level of male students is found to be higher than that of the female students. The result holds good in the three location areas as well.
- (6) There is association between castes within the scheduled castes and awareness level of the heads of family irrespective of location areas to which they belong.
- (7) There is association between the castes within scheduled castes and awareness level of the student irrespective of the location areas. This shows congruence between the awareness level of heads of family and students on this variable.
- (8) The congruence between the awareness level of heads of the family and students is further corroborated by the significant 'r' values.
- (9) The yearly income of the heads of family differ in different location areas, namely, rural, semi-urban and urban. Urban heads of family having higher income level than that of semi-urban heads of family and semi-urban heads of family having higher income than that of the rural heads of family. The same trend holds good in case of per capita income of the families except in case of rural and semi-urban areas, where the difference in the per capita incomes of families was not found significant between them.

(10) There is positive significant relationship between the income of head of family and his awareness level. In the differentiated results, however, the relationship is positive but not significant in the case of rural heads of family. The same trend features in the per capita income of the family and awareness of head of family.

(11) The educational level of the heads of family belonging to scheduled castes has association with location areas, namely, rural, semi-urban and urban areas. This implies that their educational level varies from area to area.

(12) Awareness of heads of family is associated with their educational level in the total sample when viewed differentially according to location areas, the awareness of heads of family is not related to their educational level in rural area, while the relationship between the two variables exists in urban and semi-urban areas.

(13) The occupational level of the heads of family has association with location areas, namely rural, semi-urban and urban areas.

(14) There is relationship between the awareness level of heads of family and their occupation in the total sample irrespective of the location areas. However, differential results indicate that the two variables are

not related in rural and semi-urban areas.

Consequences of Awareness :

(15) There is association between awareness of scheduled caste heads of family and utilisation of the educational schemes by their wards as revealed by significant chi-square values. The result holds good in rural, semi-urban and urban areas. Higher the awareness level of heads of the family, the higher is the utilisation of educational schemes.

(16) The awareness level of scheduled caste heads of family about schemes for their educational progress of their wards is found to be significantly related to the attending children as revealed by significant chi-square value. The same results feature in rural, semi-urban and urban areas. Higher the awareness level of the heads of family and the higher is the incidence of attending children.

(17) The awareness level of heads of family about schemes have an association with the dropout rate of children. The result holds good for the three location areas - rural, semi-urban and urban. The higher the awareness level, lower is the dropout rate.

(18) The awareness of heads of family about educational schemes have an association with the non-attending children. The result also holds good for rural, semi-urban and urban areas. The higher the awareness level, lower is the rate of non-attending children.

(19) The awareness level of scheduled caste heads of family about schemes for their educational progress is found to be significantly associated with the out of school children (Non-attending + dropout). The results are consistent in the three location areas as well.

Problems and Suggestions :

(20) More than one half of the heads of family feel that the educational schemes are partly sufficient to meet the educational costs, while some (17.0 percent) heads of family are of the opinion that the existing schemes are sufficient to meet the expenses of their children's education. About one fourth of the heads of family consider that the educational schemes provided by the government for the welfare of scheduled castes are insufficient.

(21) The heads of family suggested that rate of scholarship should be increased. Ancillary services and uniforms should be given to all students belonging to scheduled castes. They also feel that residential hostels should be provided to their wards for providing conducive environment for education which is absent at their houses.

(22) The heads of family find the publicity of educational schemes as inadequate. They want timely publicity to be made more effective by using multimedia approach.

(23) The heads of family have pointed to the social prejudices as reflected by the use of derogatory language for those availing the facilities. This they think should be remodified through educating public opinion on the issues.

(24) The heads of the family consider the conditions of eligibility heavily biased in favour of privileged groups within scheduled castes. They may be reoriented to cater to the lowest section of scheduled castes by making them more flexible. For example failure of their wards is due to cultural deprivation and they are further deprived of the benefits of schemes as well. They also want relaxation in conditions of eligibility like raising the means level ^{and} requirement of documents.

(25) The indifferent and corrupt officers responsible for the implementation are also considered road-blocks in the way of effective utilisation of the educational schemes. Careful selection and effective supervision have been suggested as measures to tackle the problem.

(26) The heads of family consider the difficulties at the ~~rece~~ time of receiving payment like irrational distribution, inefficient officials, indifferent attitude of officials, cumbersome procedure, mode of payment and delayed payment. They have given suggestions to remove the difficulties through prompt payment, rational distribution, direct release of grants, legal guardianship, fixed date and time, payment in full and cash and sympathetic attitude of the officials.

(27) The heads of family consider the procedure for the renewal of schemes as cumbersome and unnecessary. The renewal should be automatic.

Implications

The relationship between awareness level of the heads of family about educational schemes for their wards and the consequent variables of utilisation level of educational schemes, rate of attending, dropout rate, rate of non-attending and out of the school children have provided significant findings. The utilisation level of the educational schemes has been found to be associated with the level of awareness of heads of the family. Same is the case with other variables. The heads of family with higher rate of awareness level have higher incidence of attending children. The dropout rate has been found to be lower in the case of heads of family with higher level of awareness. The same trend is discernible in the case of non-attending children. Higher level of awareness has also been found to be associated with low incidence of out-of-school children which takes non-attending and dropout children combined together.

Awareness of the heads of family has emerged as potential and desirable variable. An examination of its antecedent variables indicate the direction for developing the awareness. Educational, economic and occupational level of heads of family have found to be associated with the awareness level

of heads of family, which implies that the raising of educational, occupational and economic level of heads of family is likely to increase their awareness level. This is, however, not an easy task. The government is engaged in planned effort toward raising their economic level and modernisation of occupations they are engaged in with a view to increasing productivity. This is a long term programme, however, immediate steps for raising the educational level of heads of family through programmes of adult education, non-formal education and continuing education can go a long way in accelerating the process of improving their awareness level. Special emphasis, therefore, is called for this section of Indian society which has been neglected for a long time.

It has also been found that majority of the heads of family acquire awareness through children attending the school. Very few members have reported awareness through media like newspapers and other audiovisual media. With low rate of literacy, imprinted media and voluntary organisations, Parent-Teacher Associations, may be increasingly employed for making the heads of family aware of educational schemes for the progress of their wards. A considerable number of heads of family found the educational schemes inappropriate for various reasons like biased conditions of eligibility, inadequacy in meeting the

rising cost of education, Inadequate procedure for the award of benefits under schemes, Irrational distribution system, over bureacratic administration process, etc. This requires evaluation of each of the educational schemes in terms of the specific objective which is purported to be realised with a view to providing feedback for improving the schemes and their implementation process. The evaluation should be empirical.

It has also been pointed out by the heads of family as well as students that attitude of the officers for implementing the schemes is not only indifferent but it is also derogatory at times. The persons with positive attitude and humanistic values should be given charge of these schemes. This will not only increase utilisation level but also is likely to bring higher returns from the investment in educational schemes. These officers and other staff members should be provided training in human relations.

The present study has covered only the Union Territory of Delhi. It will be worthwhile to conduct the same study in other areas to assess the situation. This will provide wider base for planning and implementation of the schemes.

Antecedent variables have provided some meaningful relationships with awareness level of the heads of family.

It will be worthwhile to enlarge these variables in future studies.

Several consequent variables have been covered in relation to awareness of heads of family in the present study. It will be worth while to study student achievement as consequent variable in relation to awareness level of heads of family.

Conclusions

Awareness of heads of family has emerged as a meaningful variable for study in the context of educational schemes for the progress of scheduled caste children. The study of antecedents and consequent variables of awareness has provided direction for improving the awareness level of heads of family so as to increase their utilisation and increase the incidence of the education amongst scheduled castes. A lot has been done in this direction and a lot more needs to be done. It is hoped that the findings and implications of the study summarised above will be helpful to those concerned with planning and implementation of the schemes to usher in era of educational progress for the long neglected section of the Indian society.
