

# Changing Faces of Empowered Classroom Leverage – Initiatives for Socially Disadvantaged Children

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## Abstract

Marginalization is a process which restricted the people of a particular group to take advantages of those opportunities which are provided by some authorities or state and central government. Every society in the world has some degree of marginalisation and experiences deprivations due to it. The fundamental causes of marginalisation vary from society to society. The partition of the population based on birth according to the Varna system became the main cause of marginalisation in Indian society. Education is also not untouched by the marginalization. This study is an attempt to explain the schemes and provisions initiated by government for marginalized children which are not only provide the education rights in institutions but also assist economically so that they can expand their status with equity in the society. Under these schemes, Government provides various scholarships and monthly stipends for different marginalized group children to study.

**Keywords:** Marginalization, Socially Disadvantage Children, Economic Development, Social Empowerment,

## INTRODUCTION

Marginalization is a universal tendency related to social stratification. In the process of marginalization, the opportunities and advantages are restricted to the individuals who are on the 'margins' while reassure the opportunities for those who are living at the centre of the society (Ramesh, 2013). The lower literacy and continuation of marginalization in educational institutions create a major problem (Stephen, 2019).

India has traditionally been a welfare state dedicated towards social well-being and all-round development of its citizens especially for poor and marginalized people. Human rights described in our Indian constitution have never been used to discriminate or marginalized any individual or group of people (Bhatla et al., 2017). Individuals with different languages, sexes, races, religions or communities have equal access to these rights. They only promote the well-being and welfare for all people by treating them equally in every aspect of their lives. Divergences in socioeconomic, political, and cultural characteristics can be found throughout the world, and national, regional and state level politics negate the free exercise of human rights for a specific number of people or groups of people (Ii, 1962).

Education is the key to moving forward in the world, obtaining better professions (Bhatla et al., 2017), and ultimately succeeding in life, and no one should be denied it. The U.S government defines the term socially disadvantaged individuals under the small business act (15 USC 637) that socially disadvantage individuals are subject to racial, ethical prejudice or cultural bias on their identity as a member of group without accepting their individual qualities (Wolfe, 2020). Socially disadvantaged children are children who are socio-culturally deficient and underprivileged. A disadvantaged child suffers from a persistent inadequacy for fundamental necessities in life. However, the Indian government has enacted numerous policies to improve the educational level of socially disadvantaged pupils, simply enacting attractive programmes and securing their enrolment in schools cannot be regarded a measure of their development and advancement. There is also a pressing need to investigate the causes of low productivity in a methodical manner. This group has a high level of academic achievement. It is widely acknowledged that many socially awkward people's learning and performance are affected by psychological and health issues. Students who are disadvantaged in numerous ways home environment and mental health are a few of these influences.

### **Socially Disadvantaged Children**

In general, the phrase “disadvantage” refers to people or groups that are physically or mentally disabled and lack financial or economic support. Lower socioeconomic groups or individuals who experience cultural and educational deprivations are referred to as socially disadvantaged. The term "socially disadvantaged children" refers to children from low-income families. Furthermore, socially disadvantaged children can be found in the country's interior tribal and rural areas, where educational facilities are not as widespread as they are in urban areas.

Socially disadvantaged individuals are those who have been subjected to racial or ethnic prejudice or cultural bias of their identity as a member of a group without regard to their individual qualities. They are not handicapped by any genetic deficiency, but by the socioeconomic circumstances of their lives related to their birth.

In India, the concept of disadvantaged groups is not a new but it is as old as the human civilisation. During the British rule, they were known as the depressed classes. These people of the particular group are the main targets of the advantaged sections in society ever since the ancient period. The various groups identified for facing discrimination due to their social disadvantaged status include – Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), Backward Class (BC), Women and Minorities (Bhatla et al., 2017). The Socially Disadvantaged Groups include the backward classes of the society like Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes, the Other Backward Classes and the Minorities. According to the 1991 Census, SCs account for 16.5%; STs 8.1%; and Minorities 17.2% of total population (Sharma, 2018).

### **Scheduled castes (SC)**

India is considered as a whole, an acutely caste-dominated country. In our Indian constitution, the term Dalits is generally known as the scheduled castes. At present they are 166.6 million of Indian population that makes them about one-sixth of Indian population.

Due to their low-level job like cobbler, scavenger and sweeper etc. they were referred to as “untouchables” before independence. Despite their large number in population, they are a community whose human rights have been grossly violated and undervalued. They are not allowed to access land

and forced to perform in undignified circumstances (Sharma, 2018). They suffer discrimination in almost aspects of life like education, health, land, religion practises etc. Their children also face continuous obstacles in education. They are not allowed to sit with other students so they sit at the end of classrooms and sometimes they suffer verbal harassment from teachers. As a result, Dalits have low literacy rates and a high dropout rate attests to the impact of these practises (Bhatla et al., 2017).

### **Scheduled tribes (ST)**

There are many tribal communities in India and they usually do not mingle with the main society. In our Indian constitution, the term schedule tribes are given to such types of communities. It is also used as an official term for "Adivasis". They have historically experienced isolation, discrimination, and underdevelopment as a result of their distinct ethnic identity from the majority of Indian society, as well as their unique culture, language, social structure, and economy. Being tribal communities, they typically live in river valleys and woodland areas and engage in activities like hunting, food gathering, and shifting cultivation. As a result, they are severely underprivileged and have never received an education. According to census 2011, the tribal population in India is 10.43 crores with 8.6% of the total population (Bhatla et al., 2017).

### **Backward class (BC)**

The Indian government uses the term "backward class" to categorise castes that face social and educational disadvantages. The caste system in India is mostly to blame for the long-standing disadvantages and limitations that the backward classes frequently experience. In terms of social, economic, and educational progress, the backward classes are among society's most backward segments in India. Due to their birth into a low caste or tribe, they inherited poor status, poverty, and illiteracy, which are their main socioeconomic concerns.

### **Women**

According to the Indian constitution, women are considered to be full citizens of India and enjoy the same rights as men. However, Indian women have historically endured immense suffering as a result of our male-dominated culture's rejection of their equal rights. In Indian society, women are primarily in charge of childbearing, although they are frequently undernourished and in poor physical shape. Indian women are frequently undereducated. Few girls actually attend school, even though the Indian constitution states that all children up to the age of 14 are entitled to free basic education.

Women in Indian society experience twice the discrimination since, in addition to belonging to a particular underprivileged class, caste, or ethnic group, they also experience all the additional forms of gender-based prejudice. They have minimal influence over many crucial life-related decisions as well as the available resources. Women typically have a lesser social standing than their male counterparts.

### **Minorities**

A sociological group or community that does not constitute a dominant political voting majority of the overall population in a given society is referred to as a minority. Six religious sects have been designated as minorities in India by the federal government. Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Zoroastrians (Parsis), and Jains are among them. According to the 1991 census, there were 145.31 million people overall, or 17.2% of the population. The Muslim group is regarded as being the most backward of all the

minorities. The lack of education among Indian Muslims is among the main causes of their backwardness. From 13.4% in the 2001 census to 14.2% in the 2011 census, more people identified as Muslims. They make up roughly 72% of India's minority communities' overall population. (Bhatla et al., 2017)

### **Indian constitution with regard to education of socially disadvantaged**

The two most disadvantaged groups in our society could be said to be scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. The Indian constitution provides statutory protections for these populations, making it necessary for the state to take particular corrective actions for their educational upliftment.

Our constitution has various clauses that serve as the cornerstone for the defence and advancement of the interests of these socially excluded groups. The following is a list of these provisions:

- **Article 15(5)** - This section, which was included in the 93rd amendment in 2005, enables the state to make exceptional accommodations for members of SCs or STs seeking admission to private educational institutions, aided or unaided.
- **Article 16 (4)** - This clause allows the state to reserve suitable openings in the public service for any state underrepresented groups in the public services.
- **Article 16(4A)** - It enables the state to adopt reservations for SCs and STs, when it comes to promotions.
- **Article 17**- This article aims to end untouchability and all forms of its practices.
- **Article 46** - Requires the governments to carefully advance the economic and educational interests of the weaker sections, particularly SC and ST.
- **Article 275** - This provision permits special grants in help to states for tribal welfare.
- **Article 335** - Relaxes the requirements for admission to educational institutions or for promotions for SCs and STs.
- **Article 339** - It enables the federal government to order states to carry out and implement policies aimed at improving the conditions of SCs and STs.
- **Article 340** - It permits the President to convene a commission to look into the situation of socially and economically disadvantaged classes and provide its findings to the legislature.

### **Government Initiatives**

The Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment has persisted in making extraordinary efforts to provide social justice for the poorer segment of society through the enforcement of particular laws and the implementation of protection programmes. The Government of India is implementing various schemes/programmes through its different Ministries/Departments for the all-round development of Scheduled Castes. Major schemes and programmes are as follows:

- ❖ Scholarships
- ❖ Hostels
- ❖ Free Coaching
- ❖ Schemes for Economic Development
- ❖ Schemes for social empowerment

## ❖ Scholarships

### 1. Pre-matric scholarship to the SC students studying IX and X standard

To solve the financial problems of schedule caste students studying in IX and X classes from economic weaker section, government has focused on the process to provide them scholarship and its implementation so that the needy students can get opportunities to study without any obstacles. The objectives of the scheme are –

- a. To assist SC parents with their children's education in classes IX and X in order to reduce dropout rates, especially during the transition from elementary to secondary education.
- b. To increase the number of SC students enrolled in classes IX and X of the pre-matric stage, as this will improve their performance and increase their chances of moving on to the post-stage.

#### Scope of the scholarship –

Scholarships under the Program will only be available for study in India and will be given out by the government of the applicant's home state or union territory.

### 2. Pre-matric scholarship to the children those engaged in occupations involving cleaning prone to health hazards

The program's goals are to give children with parents or guardians who fall under one of the following categories financial supports so they can pursue pre-matriculated education:

Individuals who are currently involved in manual scavenging or who were up to or after January 1, 1997, or the date that their State/"The UT's Employment of manual scavengers and building of Dry latrines (Prohibition) Act 1993" went into effect, whichever came first.

### 3. Post-matric scholarship to the for SC students

The program's goals are to give children with parents or guardians who fall under one of the following categories financial supports so they can pursue pre-matriculated education –

- a. With an emphasis on individuals from the poorest households, the scheme's goal is to significantly raise the Gross Enrolment Ratio of SC students in higher education by offering financial aid at the post-matriculation or post-secondary stage to help them finish their study.
- b. These scholarships are only available for study in India, and the State Government or Union Territory to which the applicant actually belongs (i.e., the State/UT in which they are permanently residing or domiciled, in accordance with the terms of domicile determined by the State) chooses the recipients.

### 4. Scholarship of top-class education for SC students

The Scheme was approved in 2007 and was subsequently revised in January, 2012 and June 2016. The aims of the scheme are – By giving complete financial assistance, recognizing and supporting quality education among students from SCs. The programme will pay for SC students to continue their education past the 12th grade.

1. Actively participating in every institution that the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has informed.
2. The SC students, who secure admission in the notified institutions, will be awarded scholarship to meet the requirements for complete tuition fees and non-refundable fees (the annual cap for students enrolled in private universities is Rs. 2.00 lakhs; for students enrolled in private flying clubs, the annual cap is Rs.3.72 lakhs);
  - a. living costs to the recipient at Rs. 2220 per month per student. Though it would only be for one quarter, the central government would pay for living expenditures in advance using the Direct Benefits Transfer method.
  - b. books and school supplies for each student at a cost of Rs. 3000 annually
  - c. a new computer and related equipment, up to a maximum of Rs. 45,000 per student, as one-time support during the course. Computers will be purchased by the Institute and given to the recipients. As an alternative, the Institute might also take into account paying back student expenses incurred during the purchase of the computer. The computer and accessories are purchased from a reputable manufacturer or provider for a maximum of Rs. 45,000.

## 5. National fellowship for scheduled caste students

In order to provide opportunity to SC students to pursue higher education leading to M.Phil. or Ph.D. degrees in the sciences, humanities, and social science streams, the National Fellowship Scheme for Scheduled Caste Students, a Central Sector Scheme, was introduced during the financial year 2005–2006.

The program's goal is to give SC students financial aid in the form of fellowships so they can pursue advanced degrees in the humanities, social sciences, engineering, and technology in Indian universities and colleges that have received UGC recognition. (Territory et al., n.d.)

### ❖ Hostel

#### **Babu Jagjivan Ram Chhatrawas Yojana**

The main goal of the Scheme is to entice implementing organisations to start a hostel construction programme with the intention of giving SC boys and girls attending middle schools, upper secondary schools, colleges, and universities access to hostel facilities. With the help of the Scheme, State Governments, UT Administrations, Central & State Universities, and other institutions can develop new dorms or expand the ones that already exist. Only the extension of their current dormitory facilities is eligible for central aid from NGOs and Deemed Universities in the private sector. (UGC, 2018)

### ❖ Free Coaching

The Scheme's goal is to offer economically disadvantaged SC and OBC candidates high-quality tutoring so they may participate in competitive exams and be successful in landing suitable jobs in the public or private sector. The Scheme offers centralized support to organizations/centers managed by the federal, state, and local governments, as well as UT administrations, central and state universities, PSUs, registered private institutions, and non-profit organizations. Coaching is



offered for the Group "A" and "B" examinations administered by the UPSC, SSC, various Railway Recruitment Boards, and State PSCs, as well as the Premier Entrance Examinations for admission to engineering, medical, and professional programmes like management, law, and others.

## ❖ Schemes for Economic Development

### 1. National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation (NSKFDC)

On January 24, 1997, a wholly owned government of India undertaking (M/o SJ&E) was established as a company "not for profit" under Section 25 of the Companies Act, 1956. Since its founding in October 1997, NSKFDC has served as India's apex corporation for the overall socioeconomic upliftment of Safai Karamcharis, Scavengers, and their dependents through a variety of loan- and non-loan-based programmes. In addition to running numerous loan- and non-loan-based programmes for the benefit of the target population, NSKFDC is essential in the fight to eradicate manual scavenging, the last remaining sign of untouchability. Under the direction of the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, NSKFDC has been named the Nodal Agency for the Central Sector Self Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers (SRMS). (Mitra & Participant, n.d.)

### 2. National Scheduled Castes Finance & Development Corporation (NSFDC)

The National Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporation (NSFDC) was founded in 1989 as a "not for profit" corporation [i.e., an earlier Section 25 company under the Companies Act, 1956] under Section 8 of the Companies Act, with the purpose of funding income-generating activities of SC beneficiaries with annual family incomes up to Rs. 3.00 lakh. By loans, skill training, entrepreneurship development programmes, and marketing support provided through State Channelizing Agencies (SCAs), RRBs, Public Sector Banks, and other organisations, NSFDC helps the target group. (Bank, 2013) **Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Assistance to Scheduled Castes Development Corporations (SCDCs)**

It is a policy initiative for the development of Scheduled Castes in which 100% assistance is given as an additive to the SCSP of the States and UTs based on certain criteria, such as the SC population of the States and UTs, the relative backwardness of the States and UTs, the percentage of SC families in the States and UTs covered by composite economic development programmes in the State Plan to enable them to cross the poverty line, etc. It is an overarching policy to ensure that Scheduled Castes receive targeted financial and material advantages from all of the general development areas. As part of their yearly plans, the States and UTs are expected to develop and implement Special Component Plans (SCP) for Scheduled Castes by allocating funds. (UGC, 2018)

### 3. Venture Capital Fund for Scheduled Castes

The Venture Capital Fund for Scheduled Castes was established by the Indian government with an initial investment of 200 crore rupees. In order to run the scheme, IFCI Ltd. will serve in the roles of Sponsor, Settler, and Asset Management Company (AMC)/Nodal Agency. The IFCI Ltd will

provide Rs 50 crore, of which Rs 5 crore would be contributed as sponsorship and Rs 45 crore as investment.

The SC entrepreneurs will receive financial help under the programme in the amount of up to Rs. 15 crores for a maximum of 6 years. The Venture Fund has the following goals:

- a. To offer SC entrepreneurs preferential financing so they can grow lucrative companies while also generating money and value for society. The assets that are so produced will also establish a forward-backward link. It will further develop a domino effect in the neighbourhood.
- b. To stimulate SC entrepreneurs to enhance the development of SC communities by increasing their financial inclusion.
- c. To economically develop SC entrepreneurs.  
(S.K. Chatterjee, 1996)

#### ❖ Schemes for Social Empowerment

##### 1. Pradhan Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana.

Pradhan Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana (PMAGY), a centrally sponsored pilot programme, is being conducted for the integrated development of Scheduled Castes (SC) majority villages with a SC Population Concentration > 50%. The programme was initially introduced in 1000 villages across five states—Assam, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Tamil Nadu. With effect from January 22, 2015, the Scheme underwent another revision and was expanded to 1500 SC-majority villages in the Indian states of Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Telangana, Haryana, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand, West Bengal, and Odisha. The main goal of the programme is the integrated development of villages with a majority of SC citizens. To that end, a gap-filling component is provided, which is used to fund initiatives that are not already covered by existing Central and State Government Schemes. (UGC, 2018)

##### 2. Dr. Ambedkar Foundation

On March 24, 1992, the Ministry of Welfare, Government of India, established the Dr. Ambedkar Foundation as a legal entity under the Registration of Societies Act, 1860. The Foundation was established with the primary goal of advancing Dr. Ambedkar's philosophy and ideology and carrying out some of the suggestions made by the Centenary Celebration Committee. (UGC, 2018)

##### 3. Padanamuri

The Kerala State Development Corporation for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe's a programme 'Padanamuri' was introduced in the district for the first time in 2017. The project's goal is to aid students in their academic endeavors by giving them access to all facilities. Only students who are members of the economically disadvantaged and marginalized groups are eligible to benefit from the programme. The annual income of the student's parents who are applying for the programme cannot exceed Rs. 1 lakh. Additionally, the student must reside in a



home with at least 800 square feet of space. The study rooms provide students with a variety of books, both academic and nonacademic, as well as computer access. This project is working in Kerala at present time. (Mantri & Yojana, 2021)

## Conclusion

Society should be also active to spread the awareness about these schemes and provision among the marginalized society for whom these are initiated by government. Only schemes and policies making by government is not enough for their educational upliftment but also to evolve the tactics to decrease the societal ideologies and obstacles so that the educational amenities are fully utilized marginalized people.

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