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Impact of Poverty on Education in India

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Abstract--Education is a critical area for the advancement and development of individuals, societies, and nations. Individuals living in poverty face numerous obstacles in their pursuit of an education and the development of good reading comprehension and vocabulary. The main purpose of this research paper is to understand the impact of poverty on education in India. Measures are required to get implemented to alleviate the barriers that arise due to poverty within the course of acquisition of education, writes Shashank Joshi and Aditya Agrawal. The main areas that have been taken into account are, childhood poverty and its manifestations, elementary education by poverty status, impact of education on reduction in poverty, influence of poverty on young children's experience of school, promoting education for women belonging to poverty stricken families, poverty and education policy in India and strategies in purview of the education policy makers.

Keywords--education policy, education, individuals, poverty, resources, strategies.

Introduction

The meaning of the term poverty, primarily means scarcity of resources. Poverty has many dimensions and due to this, there has been emergence of the notion that is termed as human poverty. The human poverty is more comprehensive as it includes access to opportunities for developing human capital and to education. (Tilak, 2018).

Education is regarded as one of the imperative areas that lead to efficient living, and HRW has called for an increase in funding for education in poor countries. Education poverty is an integral part of human poverty. It is a principal factor that is responsible for income poverty and it proves to be a barrier within the course of acquisition of education. Education poverty is the main factor that leads to income poverty, and income poverty does not permit the individuals to overcome their poverty ([Tilak, 2018](#)).

Childhood poverty and its manifestations

Poverty and the associated disadvantages influence the lives of the children in a number of ways. The primary aspect during the childhood stage is acquisition of education. The areas that affect the development of young children have been stated by experts at the University of South Africa (UNASUR) ([Coley & Baker, 2013](#)).

Families and parenting behaviour

The behaviour of the parents and other family members varies in accordance to the age of the child. When a child is young, below five years of age, he is in the initial stage of learning and understanding. As the child grows, there are changes in the behavioural traits of children as well as the parents and other family members. When a child becomes an adult, he has to realize his responsibilities and work towards the welfare of the family. There are certain aspects that prove to be disadvantageous within the course of growth and development of children.

Exposure to toxins

The prevalence of the conditions of poverty enables children to expose themselves to toxins. The various toxins, such as, tobacco smoke can lead to a wide range of health and developmental problems for children. Children's exposure to tobacco smoke varies by the conditions of poverty. The percentage of poverty stricken children living in homes, where someone smoked on a regular basis was 10 percent in 2010. The percentage for the most wealthy group of children was low, i.e. only three percent.

Food insecurity

This is apparent that the conditions of poverty gives rise to food security. The individuals experience problems in making provision of nutritious and a healthy diet to their families. When a child will not obtain proper nutritious diet, this would have detrimental effects upon their growth and development. There has been prevalence of malnutrition amongst children, primarily residing in the conditions of poverty and backwardness. Food insecurity basically means, when the intake of food of some households has been reduced and individuals find it difficult to make provision of two meals per day, because of limited resources.

Parent employment

When parents have a stable employment, then they are generally able to provide for a stable housing and a healthy household. Even when the income generated is not much, still they are aware of how to manage the household. Established employment opportunities enable them to generate income on a regular basis, so that they are able to sustain their living conditions. Low income families are required to give up certain desires, when they are not able to satisfy them.

Health insurance

Health of an individual is of utmost significance. In order to carry out any type of job or a function in life, it is important to have good health conditions. The health insurance of an individual depends upon income status. Amongst children, who are living in families below the poverty line, it becomes difficult to obtain health insurance. Medicaid programs have dramatically expanded the health insurance coverage of children, belonging to low income families. Over 70 percent of the lowest income children are on Medicaid, with the decreasing shares, covered by Medicaid in higher income brackets

Elementary education by poverty status

Children in India are usually divided into three categories, these are, those who are attending school, those who are in full time jobs, which is termed as child labour and those, who are not doing anything, these are termed as nowhere children. In rural areas, normally the households are large in size, there are usually more than three children in one nuclear family. The poverty status, does not permit the learning and education of all children, as it has been stated, when parents go to work, they usually expect their older girls to take care of their younger siblings, thus depriving them of education. Out of a total child population of 223.5 million in 2004-05, 2.9 million children or 1.3 % were ultra-poor, 66.7 million children or 29.8 % were poverty stricken, 124 million children or 55.48 % were in the non-poor low category, and 29.9 million children or 13.38 % were in the non-poor category. Thus, the proportion of children, i.e. 31.1 percent, who are poverty stricken is larger than the proportion of the total population, 28.7 % for rural sector and 25.9 % for urban sector ([Chaudhri & Jha, 2011](#)).

The increase in the child poverty of the children within the age group of 10 to 14 years in the states of Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Orissa, MP and Delhi have severe implications for potential increase in child labour and potential violation of compulsory elementary education laws unless curative policy measures are formulated. Measures and policies that are dealing with the overall decline in the poverty status, reduction in the conditions of poverty that are focused upon children, establishment of the Anganwadi centres, and implementation of elementary education laws that would need commitment from and support of six major states of India, namely Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, West Bengal, and Orissa. These states would also require major inputs of financial, organisational and institutional resources for significant implementation of the new elementary education law ([Chaudhri & Jha, 2011](#)).

Impact of education on reduction in poverty

Poverty is regarded as an impediment within the course of social, cultural, economic, political and educational development. In the present world, education is regarded as important in elimination of the conditions of poverty.

Development of knowledge and skills

Education assists in the development of knowledge and skills amongst the individuals. With the acquisition of knowledge and development of skills, they are able to acquire various types of employment opportunities. The individuals, who are educated and possess adequate knowledge will be able to enhance their wages and hence lead to elimination of poverty, therefore, higher the level of education, lesser will be the number of poverty stricken persons. The direct impact of education on reducing poverty is through increase in wages (Awan et al., 2011).

Fulfilment of basic necessities

The fulfilment of basic necessities is essential for individuals, belonging to all categories and backgrounds. An educated person is able to fulfil the basic requirements of housing, food and nutrition, civic amenities, health, cleanliness, education and other requirements. They generate awareness amongst themselves to create means to meet their basic needs and requirements. The indirect effect of education on poverty is important with respect to human poverty, the reason being, as education improves the income, the fulfilment of basic necessities becomes manageable and increases the living standards which means, decline in human poverty (Awan et al., 2011).

Improvement in the living standards

The living standards of the individuals gets improved when they acquire education. They are able to work out a better living for themselves regarding implementation of norms, values and ethics, taking care of health care requirements, and overall home environmental conditions. Investment in education increases the skills and productivity of the poverty stricken households. It improves the income level as well as the overall standard of living, i.e. human development. Poverty is also considered as a major impediment in educational attainment. Poverty affects the educational achievement in three dimensions (Awan et al., 2011).

Reduction in crime and violence

Lack of knowledge, in other words, low education or no education leads to prevalence of violent and criminal acts. There have been cases, when parents are unable to afford the medical treatment of their children, they even murder them out of the feelings of being pressurized or under stress. There have been cases, when parents are unable to take care of the needs of their children and they end their relationships with them earn his living.

Possession of ethical norms, values and principles

Education helps an individual to turn into a decent, moral and an ethical human being. To live an efficient life, it is vital for the individuals to possess certain traits and qualities. He should possess effective communication skills, he should learn to keep a control on the feelings of anger and frustration. Implement morality, truthfulness, righteousness and decency in his dealings with others. Possess a helpful and a co-operative nature and depict concern for the helpless and the needy individuals (Oxaal, 1997).

Enhancement of communication

An educated individual usually does not stay backward or secluded. If an individual has enrolled himself in school in a rural area, he is able to improve knowledge and understanding. Education and understanding has enabled rural individuals to migrate to urban areas in search for better education and employment opportunities. He is able to form links and communications with the other individuals to enhance his living conditions.

Influence of poverty on young children's experience of school

Making improvements in the attainment of educational objectives is important to eliminate poverty. The children, who are residing in the conditions of poverty have an impact upon their school life in the following ways:

Thinking of children regarding school

The children, who reside in the conditions of poverty have slower cognitive and social development and deprived physical or mental health. For the poverty stricken and most socially excluded children, like those from the travelling community, the lack of culturally appropriate education can make these difficulties even larger. So, it is inevitable that children belonging to the families that are living in poverty will experience different challenges at school to those faced by those children coming from families that are not living in poverty or are well off (Horgan, 2007).

Aspirations

All the children, whatever kind of school they got enrolled into had relatively high aspirations regarding what they would like to achieve in their later lives. At this age, they were not always realistic about their potential to meet these aspirations. When a child studying in elementary school talks about his aspirations, regarding what he wants to become when he grows up, he is not always sure regarding what he wants to become (Horgan, 2007).

Children's awareness of social difference

In schools and higher educational institutions, there are seats reserved for scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and other backward classes. In schools in

rural areas, there have been instances, when the teachers possessed this viewpoint that boys would be able to perform better than girls ([Horgan, 2007](#)).

Early drop out from school

The conditions of poverty compel the students to get dropped out of school and discontinue their studies. There have been cases of students, who have successfully completed their schooling and have scored well, they aspire to become professionals, such as doctors, lawyers, engineers, teachers, educationists, and so forth.

Academic concepts and examinations

School education is not easy and manageable, it requires regularity, diligence and conscientiousness. In various subjects, such as mathematics, social science, science, English, and Hindi, there are some concepts that are really difficult to understand. The parents of the students, who reside in the conditions of poverty, usually have either basic literacy skills or no education at all, they are not able to provide any assistance or guidance to their children. Hence, they usually depict lower academic performance.

Participation in extra-curricular activities and competitions

In schools, normally organization of competitions and functions is considered an important area. The participation of students in these activities is considered imperative as it arouses interest and enthusiasm amongst them and stimulates their mind-set. The children, belonging to poverty stricken families, usually experience problems in participating in activities and competitions. They are not able to provide for the resources, meet other requirements and practicing requires materials, which they would find difficult to arrange for.

Poverty and education policy in India

Children belonging to the poverty stricken families, who lack the basic resources and necessities live in an unsafe and polluted neighbourhoods, they are deprived of the environments that are supportive to learning. Poverty has adverse effects upon the cognitive development of the individuals. The increasing standardisation, de-skilling and control of the teachers work are viewed to have unfavourable effects upon the education of the students, who have undergone multiple deprivations because of poverty and social disadvantage ([Nambissan, 2016](#)).

The policy thrust in elementary education in India, until the early 1980s put emphasis on ensuring equal educational opportunity so as to eliminate social, gender, rural-urban and regional disparities. The standpoint was one of scarcity, where poverty stricken families were seen as mainly unaware of the significance of education as well as unable to bear the pressure of direct and indirect costs of schooling. The involvement of poor children in work, i.e. child labour was observed as a major barrier in their education. To eliminate economic barriers to children's education, incentives such as, tuition-free schooling and free textbooks

were provided to the children in publicly funded schools. Growing access and intensifying provision through relaxation of norms for establishing schools in habitations predominantly inhabited by the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes communities, were also major policy interventions to simplify access to education. Adult literacy and community mobilisation were focused upon to spread cognizance about the importance of elementary education. Mid-day meals were introduced in all schools to address hunger among children and improve enrolment and retention rates. Caste locations and ethnic or minority characteristics in themselves were not seen as major obstacles to schooling (Nambissan, 2016).

The major thrust of education policy for most of the post-independence decades was connecting of the social and gender gaps in relation to enrolment, transition and school completion rates. Less consideration was drawn to what was happening within schools despite the fact that the majority of children, who discontinued schooling, belonged to families that were at the bottom of the economic and social hierarchy and were often the first generation to receive formal education. Studies conducted in the 1990s, clearly contested principal policy and popular perceptions that child labour and parental unconcern towards education were responsible for non-enrolment of poverty stricken children and their dis-continuation from school. While the pressure of the direct costs of schooling was recognized, attention was brought to bear on the school and the quality of learning in the public system of education that was catering to poverty stricken families. Insufficient facilities, unimaginative curricula, and rote-based learning, were the factors that led to weak performance of the children and dropping out of school. The decade of the 1990s, observed an increasing emphasis on teacher training and curriculum development and a number of non-government organisations (NGOs), who were previously involved in innovative curriculum and teaching methods were brought in by the State to help make the learning experience within schools more important for children (Nambissan, 2016).

Official statistics and surveys depicted that large segments of the Indian population were living on negligible incomes and the problems of infant mortality, morbidity and malnutrition were prevalent, resulting primarily from income poverty, deprived living conditions, and scarcity of resources, these continued to have adverse effects upon their existence. Teacher education departments that have been dominated by psychology and the behaviouristic paradigm remained unaffected by the social and the economic realities of children's lives (Nambissan, 2016).

Strategies in purview of the education policy makers

The strategies need to get implemented for moderating the influence of poverty upon the educational outcomes: (Coley & Baker, 2013).

Increasing awareness of the frequency of poverty and its consequences

The prevalence of poverty amongst children is a matter of concern. It is a major barrier to the progress and development of the country. Current poverty levels,

combined with the increasing wealth differences between those at the top and bottom of the distribution, are considered as threats to undermine the democracy and limit the rising mobility of the children of future generations.

Justifiably and adequately financing of the schools

The economic recession in any area is a disadvantage towards the adequate financing of the schools. These can be helpful to the disadvantaged children, who cannot afford to pay for their education. The children who belong to poverty stricken families, mainly benefit, when adequate financing of the schools take place. There is a need for a better management of federal and state education programs aimed at elimination of poverty.

Broadening access to high-quality pre-school education

High-quality early childhood education programs aim at the improvement of the educational outcomes of all children, but focus has been put upon children, belonging to deprived and underprivileged sections of the society. Pre-school is considered as the foundation, which establishes the learning of the child. The learning of the child begins with play in pre-schools and it is vital to make provision of proper teaching and learning processes. The administration's proposed major expansion of pre-school programs throughout the country need to be supported.

Reducing segregation and isolation

There are differences between schools on the basis of various factors, such as, location, size, number of classrooms, infrastructure, civic amenities, facilities, number of teachers, educational qualifications, number of students, teaching-learning methods, extra-curricular activities, organization of cultural activities and functions and availability of finances. Irrespective of these factors, it is important that every student should have the opportunity to attend schools with other fellow students belonging to diverse social and economic backgrounds.

Adopting effective school practices

School policies that have been documented by research and practice should be effective and put into operation in an adequate manner. The school practices should be organized in a manner that it should facilitate the learning of the students. Examples include, reducing the class size, longer school days and years, and tutoring. Sometimes, learning proves to be difficult for the students and make them feel apprehensive, hence, adoption of effective school practices should be worthwhile and useful to the students.

Recognizing the importance of a high-quality teacher workforce

Recruiting and retaining experienced, skilled, knowledgeable and high-quality teachers in the high poverty classrooms should be of the utmost priority and may require special incentives. Teachers have a major role to play in the growth and development of the students. The major problem of the education poverty can be

solved by skilled and proficient teachers. Therefore, there are number of factors that need to be taken into consideration, when recruiting teachers, such as, skills, experience, educational qualifications, nature, attitude and so forth.

Improving the measurement of poverty

The rate of poverty is an important social and economic indicator that is used to distribute resources for scores of federal, state, and local programs. Work should continue to increase the official definition of income to include government spending, directed at low income families and to recognize the cost of living variations across the regions. These individuals need to focus upon, where the families are severely facing the conditions of poverty and scarcity and implement measures to overcome them.

Conclusion

Acquisition of education requires the fulfilment of needs and requirements by the individuals. In Government schools, education is provided free of cost, but the individuals themselves have to obtain other items, such as uniforms, school bags, stationary, transportation facilities and so forth. For the poverty stricken individuals, it becomes difficult to meet these requirements. They usually expect their girls to perform the household chores and take care of their siblings, while their parents go to work. The main objective of the poverty stricken families is to generate a source of income, so that they are able to fulfil their basic necessities.

Educational opportunities that are provided by the society to the poverty stricken individuals are insufficient, in terms of access to schools, and access to quality of education in the form of schools with appropriate infrastructure, qualified, proficient and skilful teachers and pleasant learning environment. The role of the international organisations, private schools and also non-governmental organisations is important but is limited, and can be viewed at best as marginal, and the responsibility of the State remains of utmost significance. In order to facilitate education amongst the poverty stricken individuals, it is essential to make provision of financial assistance, infrastructure, civic amenities, creative activities, instructional strategies and proper teaching-learning methods within schools, so they feel motivated towards learning.

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