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Schooling status of socially marginalized children: A study of unorganized workers in urban Meerut

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Abstract

As an effort towards universalization of basic education government has poured extensive resources to ensure the availability of primary school facility in Uttar Pradesh to every child coming from the lower income group of the society. This study is an endeavour to focus on the schooling of children coming from the vulnerable sections of the society. There is an urgent need to pay heed & divert government attention towards this issue as these children face multidimensional deprivations.

Keywords: Universalization of education, extensive resources, multidimensional deprivation

Introduction

Education as tool of transforming lives, paves the path to inclusive and sustainable development and helps in building a peaceful society. Education forms the foundation of any nation. It enhance productivity, prosperity, enriches life experiences, augment opportunities, nurture talent, increase human potential and capabilities. It affects all aspects of human life.

India as a welfare state, is committed to the wellbeing of its citizens in general & the deprived sections of the society in particular. Guided by the provisions of Indian constitution, government of India has introduced varied welfare measures for the downtrodden. Women & Children jointly constitute about 67.7% of Indian total population as per census 2011^[4]. Around 158 million children are in the age group of 0-6 yrs. (Census 2011) ^[4]. It is imperative to safeguard overall development of these children coming from the marginalized sections of the society in order to achieve the goal of inclusive growth. Right of children to free & compulsory education (RTE) 2009 and the National Early Childhood Care and Education Policy (2013) are the steps in this direction. Education is the most vital component in a Childs life, as it enhances their skills, personality and attitude towards life. Government efforts all alone are incapable of bringing the desired outcome in this matter. Another important factor which plays a prominent role is the parents choice & attitude towards schooling of their children. Most school choice policies are based on rational choice theory (RCT) which assumes that parents make best choice for their children, as they have access to complete information (Bosetti 2004) ^[2].

Government-private schooling debate is based on the concept of choice (Rose 2007) ^[7]. Private education does not tend to serve areas and people that government provisions has been unable to reach (Lewin 2007) ^[6]. Marketization & privatization of education are spreading vigorously.

Review of Literature

A large number of studies have been conducted about schooling of children but very few on the children belonging to the deprived sections of our society. Some of them have been discussed here.

Ceka A, Murati R (2016) ^[3], analyse the influence of parents on their children's education. Social circumstances, family educational potential, physical health of children, moral values, attitudes are found to be the major determinants of child's education. Results suggest that not only educational institutions availability but family environment as well affect the schooling of children.

Bhatla. S. (2017) ^[1], explores the educational status of socially backward children.

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As far as their access to schools is concerned after RTE Act 2009 conditions have improved and it drives for inclusive and equitable quality education but findings highlight that traditional disadvantages create barriers even today in the lower income group of society specifically the gender barriers.

Chaturvedi M. (2021) [5], exhibits the relative importance of quality of schools as well as house hold characteristics in the decision making about school choice of parents for their children. Standard binary choice model is used to evaluate the effect of house-hold income in determining the type of school chosen for the child. Per capita income is found to be the major determinant. Chance of choosing a private school is positively correlated to the level of income.

Methodology and Area of Study

Present study is based on descriptive research design. Non-randomized purposive sampling technique is used. Required information from 250 autorickshaw drivers of Meerut city of Uttar Pradesh is collected with the help of observation method and structured interview schedule including questions related to schooling of their children. Relevant data have been classified & tabulated under various heads as per requirement. The results have been presented in percentage and charts.

Objective of the study: The objective of this study is to analyse and discuss the schooling status of children of unorganized sector workers.

Results of the study

Table 1: Age of the respondents

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Age		
15-25	51	20.4
25-35	122	48.8
35-45	70	28.0
45-55	7	2.8
	250	100.00

Source: Based on field survey.

Table 1 represents age structure of the respondents. 20.4% respondents are of 15-25 years of age. Highest number of respondents lies in the 25-35 age group (48.8%) only 7 are in age group 45-55, 28 percent are in the age group 35 to 45 years.

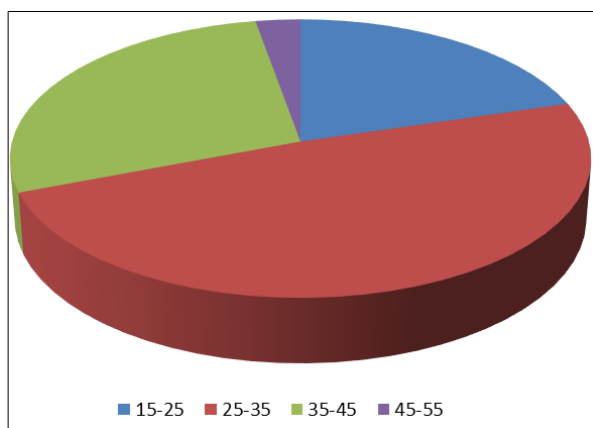


Fig 1: Age of the respondents

Table 2: Religious composition of respondents.

Factor	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Religion			
	Hindu	227	90.8
	Muslim	20	8.0
	Sikh	2	.8
	Christian	1	.4
		250	100.00

Source: Based on field survey.

Table 2 represents the religious composition of the respondents. Out of 250 respondents majority (90.8%) is of Hindus, Muslims are 8%, Sikhs .8% and .4% Christians.

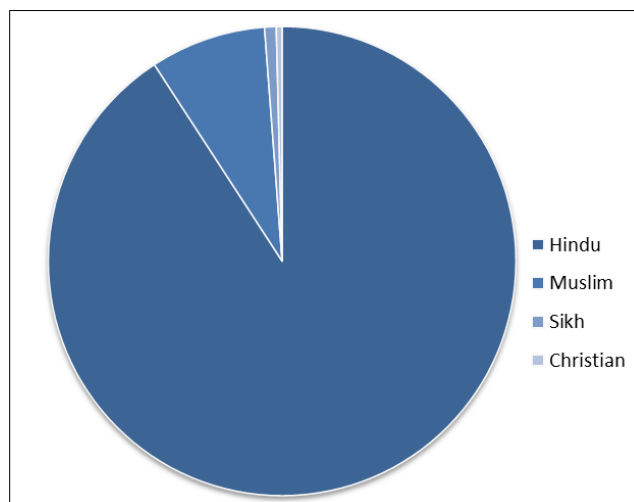


Fig 2: Religious composition of respondents

Table 3: Caste wise distribution of the respondents

Factor	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Caste			
	Gen	10	4.0
	OBC	42	16.8
	SC	198	79.2
	ST	NIL	--
	Total		100.00

Source: Field Survey

Table 3 presents caste wise distribution of respondents, 4.0% belongs to Gen category, 16.8% to OBC & rest 79.2% are of SC category.

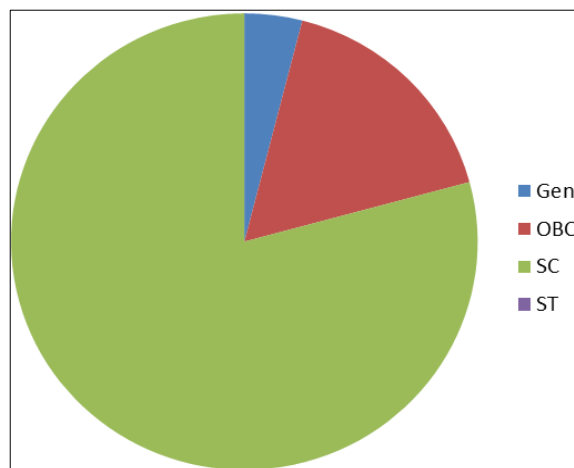


Fig 3: Caste wise distribution of the respondents

Table 4: Educational Categorization of respondents

Factor	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Education			
	Illiterate	22	8.8
	Primary	94	37.6
	Middle	110	44.0
	High School	20	8.0
	Intermediate	4	1.6
		250	100.00

Source: Based on field survey

Table 4 exhibits the educational categorization of the respondents. 22 (8.8%) of the total respondents are illiterate, 94 (37.6%) have only primary education, highest no of respondents. i.e. 110 have education upto middle class & only 20 respondents (8%) have passed high school, very few i.e. (1.6%) have education upto intermediate. It is obvious that educational profile of respondents is very poor.

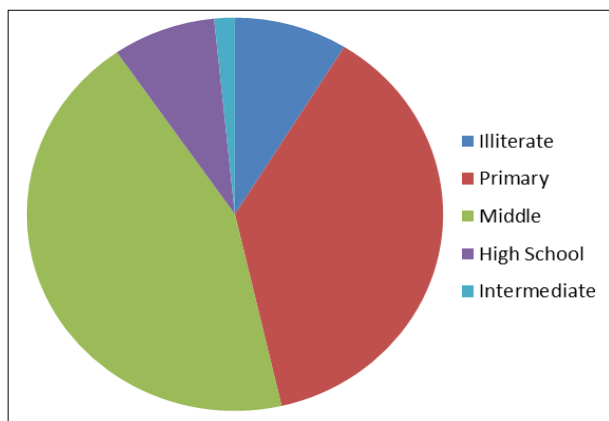


Fig 4: Educational Categorization of respondents

Table 5: Type of School respondents children are going.

Factor	Respondents	Percentage
Type of school		
Govt.	140	56.0
NGO	20	8.0
Private	90	36.0
	250	100.00

Source: Based on field survey

Table 5 shows the type of school these respondents are sending their children for schooling. Majority of the respondents (56%) are sending their children to government schools while 36% respondents prefer private school & rest 8% are sending their children to NGO run schools.

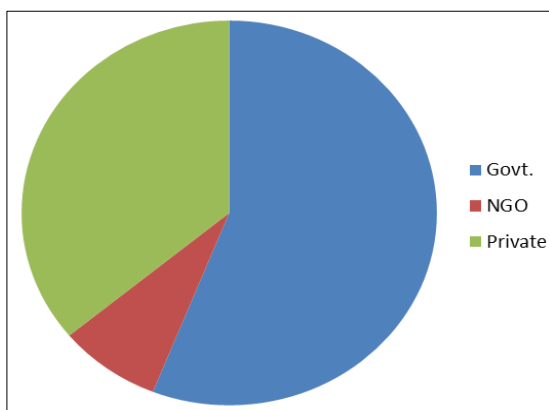


Fig 5: Type of School respondents children are going

Conclusion

This research study reveals that the unorganized sector workers face various type of deprivations in their lives even than they are firm determined to educate their children. They are optimistic that education can help their children to get out of vicious cycle of poverty. Results disclose that single earner household is sending their children to government school while the families in which both the parents are working preferred to sent their children to private school. One more distinct feature was that mostly respondents send their sons to private schools inspite of their daughters. In this way gender based disparity was found. More efforts are required on the part of our government in the form of increased investment for girls education, specially coming from the families of unorganised sector workers, as they are at the bottom of economic pyramid.

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