

## An analysis of educational attainment among different social groups in India

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### Abstract

Attainment of education is essential for both living standards of the people and also in augmenting capabilities of the individuals. Earlier empirical researches confirm that advancement of educational attainment leads to a highly skilled and productive workforce, producing more efficiently a higher standard of goods and services, which in turn forms the basis for faster economic growth and improve standards of living (Schultz, 1961<sup>1</sup>; Danison 1962<sup>2</sup>; Romer, 1990<sup>3</sup>). Understanding patterns of educational attainment among the population is a critical concern for our nation as we seek to make education access and attainment more equitable across our increasingly diverse community. The study highlights the trends, pattern, and differentials in levels of educational attainment of different social groups of the rural and urban areas separately. The study also examines the influence of caste factor on the levels of attainment of education of social groups in rural and urban areas. The study is based on secondary data. It has been found that there is a cumulative improvement in the percentage of the social groups' population with different categories of educational attainment in both sectors over the period. Despite the improvement in the status of educational attainment of STs, SCs and OBCs, the difference between the scheduled population and non-scheduled population is noticeable. It can be concluded that if inequalities in access to education exist that will lead to socio-economic disparities in society.

**Keywords:** educational attainment, social groups

### Introduction

Distribution of educational attainment across the nation is likely to a better indicator of prospering economic growth than a high average level. Attainment of education is essential for both living standards of the people and also in augmenting capabilities of the individuals. Earlier empirical researches confirm that advancement of educational attainment leads to a highly skilled and productive workforce, producing more efficiently a higher standard of goods and services, which in turn forms the basis for faster economic growth and improve standards of living (Schultz, 1961<sup>4</sup>; Danison 1962<sup>5</sup>; Romer, 1990<sup>6</sup>). Shreds of evidence also examined that education broadly accessible expands labour market opportunities and reduces social inequalities in society (Kuznets, 1955<sup>7</sup>; Tinbergen, 1977<sup>8</sup>). Studies in recent years indicates that there is a strong significant relationship between education and socio-economic inequality and equality of educational opportunity has been suggested as one of the solutions to overcome the problem of socio-economic inequality (Schultz, 1963<sup>9</sup>; Ahluwalia, 1976<sup>10</sup>; Knight and Sabot, 1983<sup>11</sup>). Education can bring desirable changes in society, change its status and modernise it.

It may transform society by creating opportunities and accelerates the rate of developmental change by making people more favourable towards reform.

Today, the role of educational attainment in any country is more critical than ever before because there is a need for the knowledge-based economy across the world. If a particular group does not match itself to the critical demand of the society, it may lag behind the other more developed sections of the society.

It has been observed that education could enhance the level of income and thus effectively reduce the absolute level of poverty by opening up new opportunities for children coming from a low-income family and therefore, acts as a vehicle for social mobility as well as improves the distribution of income. (Schultz, 1961<sup>12</sup>; Psacharopoulos, 1977<sup>13</sup>, 1998<sup>14</sup>; and Tinbergen, 1977<sup>15</sup>). For historical reasons, in India, social groups differ to mean as well as the distribution of economic welfare and their extent of inclusion in the mainstream in rural India is least (one-third) for the STs, followed by the SCs (one-half) OBCs (0.68) and the Others (0.83) (Suryanarayana, 2008)<sup>16</sup>. Various empirical evidence indicates that individuals from the STs/SCs/OBCs social group suffer from exclusion and discrimination in different development indicators. Consequently, India has been suffering from acute inequality in education, employment, and income on the ground of gender, caste and ethnicity. Research on educational stratification argued that inequality in education between different social classes continues and sometimes even widens despite educational growth (Halsey, Heath, and Ridge 1980<sup>17</sup>; Hauser and Featherman; 1976<sup>18</sup>). Various studies confirmed that more inequality and greater ethnicity diversity hurts growth and make growth slower (Easterly and Levine, 1997<sup>19</sup>; Banerjee and Duflo 2003<sup>20</sup>; and Kanbur, 2002<sup>21</sup>). Stephan Klasen (2002)<sup>22</sup> argued that gender inequality in education directly affects economic growth by reducing average human capital. It observed that a significant increase in access to higher education over the last decades. Despite this, there is a severe asymmetry in terms of Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for disadvantaged sections. It has been noticed that Indian education is its

inherent inequalitarian nature, where educational facilities are unequally distributed among the socio-economic, gender, regional, caste, and occupational groups of the population. To break the recurrent chain of inequalities, where inequalities in education contribute to disparities in labour market information, which lead to inequalities in employment, which further cause inequalities in earnings that brought socio-political imbalances, which in turn cause inequalities in participation in education (Carnoy, 1993)<sup>23</sup>. Therefore, policy-makers in most countries have been making efforts in reducing inequality in educational opportunity. Understanding patterns of educational attainment among the population is a critical concern for our nation as we seek to make education access and attainment more equitable across our increasingly diverse community. Therefore, there is a need to know people with educational attainment across the sections of the society. The study highlights the trends, pattern, and differentials in levels of educational attainment of different social groups of the rural and urban areas separately.

### Review of Literature

**Barro J. Robert (2001)** <sup>[24]</sup>: Estimates the impact of education on economic growth. His study included around 100 countries for the period from 1965 to 1995, and found that an additional year of schooling raises the growth rate by 0.44 per cent per year. The result implies that growth is positively related to the male adult with the secondary educational level of attainment and higher levels and growth is insignificantly related to the male population having primary schooling. However, this primary schooling is a prerequisite for secondary education and would indirectly affect growth. He also analysed the impact of female education and found that female education does not much affect the growth. He also measured the impact of the quality of education on growth and suggested the quality of education is more critical for growth relative to quantity aspects.

**Njong Mom Aloysius (2010)** <sup>[25]</sup>: In his study evaluated the effect of different levels of education of the employed individuals on poverty in Cameroon. He found that educational attainment has a significant negative impact on poverty, and higher levels of education is more effective on poverty reduction. It means that the educational level of individual increases the likelihood of an individual to being poor less. Njong concluded that educational attainment of the male has more impact on poverty alleviation in relative to female because female faces more obstacle for themselves to combat poverty due to discrimination in education and unequal employment opportunities. Njong suggested that there are requirements of positive steps to provide a conducive employment environment for the female with equal educational opportunities.

**UNESCO (2012)** <sup>[26]</sup>: Report argued that there has been expanding access to formal primary education worldwide. However, there has been significant inequalities between countries persisting, and national averages in many countries continue to mask striking disparities in levels of educational attainment and outcomes. In many states, too many children are learning far too little, and children skip school without having obtained fundamental learning skills.

In this way, many children and youth have excluded because they do not acquire necessary skills, like literacy and basic knowledge that are critical for further learning.

**Dawood and Murshed Mansoob (2012)** <sup>[27]</sup>: In their research found that education occupies a central position to fulfil the gap that exists between a skilled and unskilled person and pointed out that countries having a higher amount of human capital are able in reducing inequality. However, human capital in other countries has an inequalitarian effect.

**Boroah Vani K. (2011)** <sup>[28]</sup>: Accessed the educational disparity among children age group 8–11 years from different social groups in India. He also enquired why different children have different levels of educational achievement. He observed children from all the different social groups were disadvantaged more or less in competencies such as reading, arithmetic, and writing after controlling for some parental, household and school-related factors as compared to Brahmin children. However, this disadvantage was most significant for Muslim, Dalit, and Adivasi children. The study concluded that Brahmin and High Caste children enjoyed the structural advantage over their Dalit and Muslim counterparts.

**Khalid and Nidhi (2012)** <sup>[29]</sup>: assessed the disparities in access to higher education prevailing in India across different social, religious and economic and occupational groups and types of institutions over the period. They had observed that changes in disparities in access to higher education over time. They observed that SCs/STs among social groups, Muslims among religious groups, agricultural labour in rural, casual labour in urban areas among occupational groups at the lowest position in concerned area. They also found that GER of those belonging to upper consumption class is higher than that of lower consumption class. Their analysis shows that SCs/STs among social groups and Muslims among religious groups have the lowest probability of enrolment in higher education. They concluded that traditional hierarchy across social groups existed not only in 2007-08, but it has been continuing over the periods.

The study entitled “An Analysis of Educational Attainment among different Social Groups in India” tries to seek the answer of the following questions.

1. Has the disparities across social groups in terms of educational attainment of education across rural and urban India reduced overtime or not?
2. If there is a reduction in educational differences between the social groups, is it steady across different educational levels or is it unduly concentrated at certain educational stages?
3. How far caste has affected educational attainment of the population?

### Objectives of the Study

1. To analyse the trends and patterns of different level of educational attainment among social groups (STs/SCs/OBCs/General) in both rural and urban India.
2. To examine the impact of caste on educational attainment of social groups (STs/SCs/OBCs/General) in both rural and urban India.

**Data and Methodology**

The study is based on secondary data that have been accessed from the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), Government of India. The unit level data has been included in this study obtained from the survey of NSS quinquennial rounds 64<sup>th</sup> round (Education in India: Participation and Expenditure for the year 2007-08)<sup>30</sup>, and 71<sup>st</sup> round (Social Consumption: Education in India in 2014).<sup>31</sup> As per NSSO 71<sup>st</sup> round survey, the share of STs Population is 12.44 per cent in rural areas, and the corresponding percentage is less than 4 per cent in urban areas during 2014-15. The bulk of the scheduled caste population (21 per cent) reside in rural areas and only about 11 per cent of the scheduled caste population lives in urban areas during the same year. The survey also reports the share of OBCs in the total population, which was 43.26 per cent in rural areas and 42.9 per cent in urban areas during 2014-15. The study categorises social groups population as Scheduled Tribes (STs), Scheduled Castes (SCs), Other Backward Classes (OBCs) and Others/General. Based on the household level observations, individual-level observations are generated for the present study. The study assesses the state of educational attainment/completed level of education as it is the highest level a person has completed successfully (namely: not literate, elementary, secondary, senior secondary and graduation and above degree holder) Among social groups. If a person has successfully passed the final year of a given level, then and only then he/she was considered to have attained that level of education. For example, for a person studying in Class IX, the educational level will be upper primary and not secondary. The study also examines the influence of caste factor on the levels of attainment of education of social groups in rural and urban areas. For analysing the influence of caste on the attainment of education, the study has used probit regression analysis, where the dependent variable and independent variables are in binary form. The probit regression model is to regress the independent variables on the binary dependent variable. For the present econometric exercise, the educated population is binary in nature, which can take the value of either 1(educated) or 0 (uneducated). A probit model is:

$$Pr (Y_i \neq 0 | x_i) = \Phi (x_i a)$$

**Table 1:** Educational Attainment of the Population (15 Years and Above Age Group) in Rural Areas as per 64<sup>th</sup> and 71<sup>st</sup> NSS Round Surveys (In Percentage Terms)

NSS Survey	64 <sup>th</sup> Round			71 <sup>st</sup> Round			75 <sup>th</sup> Round		
	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person
Education level/Gender									
Illiterate	28.79	53.08	40.92	24.78	46.29	35.49	22.20	41.20	31.50
Elementary Education	38.38	27.03	32.72	35.51	27.14	31.34	31.00	34.80	38.10
Secondary Education	12.9	7.24	10.08	15.58	10.21	12.9	17.3	12.5	15.0
Senior Secondary Education	6.48	3.1	4.79	9.5	5.69	7.6	12.0	7.6	9.9
Graduation and Above Degree	3.89	1.62	2.76	5.89	2.86	4.38	7.4	3.9	5.7

**Source:** Author's calculation, NSS 64<sup>th</sup> Round Survey, 2007-08, 71<sup>st</sup> Round Survey, 2014-15 and 75<sup>th</sup> Round Survey Report, 2017-18<sup>32</sup>.

It is observed that the proportion of illiterate male and female population has been declining in rural areas over the periods. Table 1 depicts that a significant improvement has been seen in the percentage of people having elementary education, and growth has also been observed in the proportion of people having secondary education but in a declining trend. A steady rise is also noted among people having attainment of senior secondary.

Where,  $\Phi$  is the standard cumulative normal distribution, and  $x_i a$  is probit index. The probit model calculates the change in the probability for an infinitesimal change in each continuous independent variable. In case of a dummy dependent variable, it reports the discrete change in the probability.

The regression analysis have conducted with the help of various statistical packages like SPSS and STATA. There are following categories of variables concerning both dependent as well as independent variables which are used in the different econometric models as given below.

**Dependent Variables**

- Person attained elementary education
- Person attained secondary education
- Person attained senior secondary education
- Person attained graduation and above degree

**Description**

- Its value is 1 if a person has the attainment of elementary education, 0 otherwise.
- Its value is 1 if a person has the attainment of secondary education, 0 otherwise.
- Its value is 1 if a person has the attainment of senior secondary education, 0 otherwise.
- Its value is 1 if a person has the attainment of graduation and above degree, 0 otherwise.

**Independent Variables**

- STs
- SCs
- OBCs

**Description**

- Its value 1 if ST, 0 otherwise.
- Its value 1 if SC, 0 otherwise.
- Its value 1 if OBC, 0 otherwise.
- Other (Reference =General/Others)

**Discussion**

This section of the study examines data accessed from NSSO 64<sup>th</sup> and 71<sup>st</sup> round survey to state the contemporary patterns of educational attainment of social groups focusing different levels of educational attainment.

And graduate and above in rural areas. It is also analysed that rural female educated population has been increased but still lagging from their counterparts. It means that inequality in the educational attainment of the rural community is still prevalent. In rural areas among the educated population, a small proportion of the people had a higher level of educational attainment, and a substantial percentage of people have elementary education over the periods.

**Table 2:** Educational Attainment of the Population of (15 Years and Above Age) in Urban Areas as per 64<sup>th</sup> and 71<sup>st</sup> NSS Round Surveys (In Percentage Terms)

NSS Survey	64 <sup>th</sup> Round			71 <sup>st</sup> Round			75 <sup>th</sup> Round		
	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person
Illiterate	11.68	25.83	18.5	10.57	22.33	16.34	8.80	19.30	13.90
Elementary Education	33.19	29.56	31.43	28.75	26.61	27.7	28.10	29.30	28.70
Secondary Education	19.04	15.84	17.49	18.98	16.25	17.64	20.40	17.90	19.20
Senior Secondary Education	12.54	10.17	11.4	14.46	12.5	13.5	18.10	15.10	16.60
Graduation and Above Degree	17.85	12.58	15.31	21.28	16.1	18.74	24.60	18.60	21.70

Source: Author's calculation, NSS 64<sup>th</sup> Round Survey, 2007-08, 71<sup>st</sup> Round Survey, 2014-15 and 75<sup>th</sup> Round Survey Report, 2017-18.

When we analyse the NSS data considering the urban population as per the concerned rounds, data reflect that comparatively less proportion of the illiterate population occupied in urban areas than their rural counterparts. For example, there were 18.5 per cent, 16.34 per cent and 13.90 per cent illiterate population in respective rounds. In urban areas also, among the educated population, a significantly higher proportion of people that have the attainment of elementary education. However, they have in less proportion than their rural counterparts.

The data for the educated urban population reveal that they have larger in proportion in terms of attainment of secondary, senior secondary and higher education than their rural counterparts at each point of time. It has also been observed from the table that the proportion of people having attainment described above the level of education had been improved in urban areas over the periods. Table 2 also shows that the percentage of the male population has a different level of educational attainment is more than their female counterparts. So gender disparity has been observed for the same, but this disparity is less than rural areas.

**Table 3:** Educational Attainment of Rural Population (15 Years and Above Age) across Social Groups as per 64<sup>th</sup> and 71<sup>st</sup> NSS Round Surveys (In Percentage Terms)

Level of Educational Attainment		Illiterate		Elementary Education		Secondary Education		Senior Secondary Education		Graduate and Above Degree	
Social Groups	Gender	64 <sup>th</sup> Round	71 <sup>st</sup> Round	64 <sup>th</sup> Round	71 <sup>st</sup> Round	64 <sup>th</sup> Round	71 <sup>st</sup> Round	64 <sup>th</sup> Round	71 <sup>st</sup> Round	64 <sup>th</sup> Round	71 <sup>st</sup> Round
Scheduled Tribes	Male	38.9	33.55	36.37	36.24	6.96	10.84	3.35	5.76	1.66	2.98
	Female	64.47	55.35	20.36	24.91	3.71	6.99	1.19	3.26	0.47	1.53
	Person	51.67	44.39	28.37	30.6	5.33	8.93	2.27	4.52	1.07	2.26
Scheduled Castes	Male	37.15	31.55	36.77	35.49	9.09	12.62	4.73	7.76	2.59	3.78
	Female	61.79	53.63	23.44	25.12	4.63	7.94	2.14	4.4	0.69	1.54
	Person	49.37	42.49	30.16	30.35	6.88	10.3	3.44	6.1	1.65	2.67
Other Backward Classes	Male	27.96	23.86	39.55	35.92	13.41	15.75	6.28	9.89	3.21	5.65
	Female	54.8	47.88	26.5	26.2	6.91	10.05	2.85	5.74	1.35	2.74
	Person	41.4	35.89	33.02	31.05	10.16	12.89	4.56	7.81	2.28	4.19
General	Male	18.94	16.05	38.55	34.43	17.73	20.27	9.62	12.21	7.09	9.66
	Female	37.98	32.32	33.77	31.78	11.49	14.13	5.16	7.99	3.37	4.89
	Person	28.44	24.12	36.16	33.12	14.62	17.22	7.4	10.12	5.23	7.3

Source: Author's calculation, NSS 64<sup>th</sup> Round Survey, 2007-08, and 71<sup>st</sup> Round Survey, 2014-15.

When we analysed the educational attainment across social groups in rural areas, we find that the proportion of the illiterate population was highest in STs Community across social groups. However, the uneducated people have significantly been reduced from 64<sup>th</sup> round to 71<sup>st</sup> round. It has been observed that the female population among each social group is relatively higher illiterate than their male counterparts. So, we can say that STs still have the most illiterate population across all groups, and far behind the general population. However, their reduction rate in the male and female illiterate population is more significant than any groups. While that of SCs and OBCs have a more illiterate population as the general population in both the period. There has been the highest proportion of the population with elementary education among the general community followed by OBCs, STs and SCs in both rounds. We have seen that the male population having elementary education are in a dominating position than their female counterparts. The proportion of people having elementary education is declining in general, and OBCs but no change occurred in SCs and STs. The percentage of people with a below primary level of education was highest among STs followed by SCs, OBCs and General in both rounds and a

small reduction in proportions of people of this level in STs and SCs, but no change in the general population and OBCs. The proportion of people having a secondary level of education were highest among general categories followed by OBCs, SCs, STs (8.93 per cent) and their proportion has been risen over the period across all social groups. However, the hierarchy still exists. The percentage of person possesses senior secondary education was the highest among general across all social groups followed by OBC, SCs and STs. There has been a slight improvement in the proportion of male and female having senior secondary education across all social group in the current round but no change in hierarchy. Various studies also confirm that a large number of people from socially disadvantaged groups are still forced to be excluded from the completion of education due to lack of educational opportunity in childhood and denial of the economic rights in the past. It is observed that the proportion of people having graduate and high degree has been increasing over the period but not significant. Among all social groups, the general community has the highest percentage of graduate, and above people (7.3 per cent) followed by OBCs (4.19 per cent), SCs (2.67 per cent) and only 2.26 per cent in ST's. Gender disparity in

educational attainment has been exiting across social groups, and STs and SCs have not educationally advanced,

and they have even less proportion of people with educational attainment than OBCs and General caste.

**Table 4:** Educational Attainment of Urban Population (15 Years and Above Age) across Social Groups as per 64<sup>th</sup> and 71<sup>st</sup> NSS Round Surveys (In Percentage Terms)

Level of Educational Attainment		Illiterate		Elementary Education		Secondary Education		Senior Secondary Education		Graduate and Above Degree	
Social Groups	Gender	64 <sup>th</sup> Round	71 <sup>st</sup> Round	64 <sup>th</sup> Round	71 <sup>st</sup> Round	64 <sup>th</sup> Round	71 <sup>st</sup> Round	64 <sup>th</sup> Round	71 <sup>st</sup> Round	64 <sup>th</sup> Round	71 <sup>st</sup> Round
Scheduled Tribes	Male	17.12	12.05	34.21	29.81	19.61	18.19	10.82	13.56	12.21	18.17
	Female	36.56	26.96	27.62	26.85	13.23	15.54	7.73	13.37	7.3	10.91
	Person	26.7	19.35	30.96	28.36	16.46	16.89	9.29	13.47	9.79	14.61
Scheduled Castes	Male	19.48	16.52	41.43	37.2	14.23	16.53	8.64	11.25	8.15	11.09
	Female	40.47	33.69	30.21	29.85	10.75	12.71	6.88	9.62	4.23	7.79
	Person	29.61	24.84	36.02	33.64	12.55	14.68	7.79	10.46	6.26	9.49
Other Backward Classes	Male	13.58	12.54	36.85	31.64	19.88	19.78	11.17	13.35	11.93	15.87
	Female	30.15	25.83	32.19	28.25	15	15.9	8.43	11.74	7.49	10.86
	Person	21.57	19.15	34.6	29.95	17.52	17.85	9.85	12.55	9.79	13.38
General	Male	7.29	6.36	27.51	22.78	19.92	19.11	15	16.78	26.06	30.59
	Female	16.91	14.28	27.37	23.74	18.34	17.91	12.8	14.23	19.71	24.96
	Person	11.92	10.22	27.44	23.25	19.16	18.52	13.94	15.54	23	27.85

Source: Author's calculation, NSS 64<sup>th</sup> Round Survey, 2007-08, and 71<sup>st</sup> Round Survey, 2014-15.

The data related to the educational attainment of urban social groups show that illiterate population has been getting reduced and a substantial reduction in the illiterate population was observed in scheduled groups than non-scheduled groups. However, illiterate people are still in a larger proportion in the urban scheduled community than OBCs and general. It is also indicated that there was no change in the quantum of people that have below primary education across social groups. It has been analysed that share of low categories educated person was highest among the educated population of all social groups, though their proportion is declining across social groups over the period. From the available data, it is observed that the percentage of people that have completed secondary education is increasing but not in notable percentage in case of urban SCs, while it is reducing in the general community. Even though no significant change was observed in this level of attainment in STs and OBCs. It has been seen that the proportion of person holding senior secondary education and graduate and above degree has been increasing across social groups from the previous period. The general population is the most forward group to attain higher categories of education than social disadvantage groups, and they are inheritably dominated over their counterparts with respect to educational attainment. However, this domination is getting deteriorated with exploding educated population among scheduled and backward groups.

Table 4 highlights that disparity is prevailing for the attainment of different level of education in social groups and their respective gender.

The male population of each social groups has an advantage over their female counterparts in this matter in urban areas too.

A comparative analysis of educational attainment of urban social groups population with their rural counterpart suggests us that urban social groups are educationally more advance. However, the educational gap is narrowing down over the period for the lower categories of educated people significantly.

**Econometric Analysis**

As we observed in the various relevant literature, gender, caste, religions, occupation, and economic status are the critical determinants that play a significant role in attending education. In this particular econometric analysis, the educated population (from 15 years and above age) say an individual having elementary education, secondary, senior secondary and higher degree independently has been considered as a dependent variable.

Therefore, we use a probit model to regress the independent variables (caste of the individuals) on the binary dependent variable.

When we apply the probit model, reference groups are taken as General caste in all empirical investigations.

**Table 5:** Result of Maximum Likelihood Probit Model for the Levels of Educational Attainment in Rural Areas as per 64<sup>th</sup> and 71<sup>st</sup> NSS Round Surveys

NSS Survey Independent Variables	64 <sup>th</sup> Round		71 <sup>st</sup> Round	
	Coefficient	P-Value	Coefficient	P-Value
Elementary Education				
Scheduled Tribes <sup>#</sup>	-0.0785***	(0.000)	-0.0342***	(0.000)
Scheduled Castes <sup>#</sup>	-0.0583***	(0.000)	-0.0296***	(0.000)
Other Backward Classes <sup>#</sup>	-0.0349***	(0.000)	-0.0221***	(0.000)
Secondary Education				
Scheduled Tribes <sup>#</sup>	-0.0586***	(0.000)	-0.0622***	(0.000)
Scheduled Castes <sup>#</sup>	-0.0459***	(0.000)	-0.0471***	(0.000)
Other Backward Classes <sup>#</sup>	-0.0262***	(0.000)	-0.0300***	(0.000)
Senior Secondary Education				

Scheduled Tribes <sup>#</sup>	-0.0256***	(0.000)	-0.0353***	(0.000)
Scheduled Castes <sup>#</sup>	-0.0155***	(0.000)	-0.0189***	(0.000)
Other Backward Classes <sup>#</sup>	-0.0134***	(0.000)	-0.0105***	(0.000)
Graduation and Above Degree				
Scheduled Tribes <sup>#</sup>	-0.0112***	(0.000)	-0.0204***	(0.000)
Scheduled Castes <sup>#</sup>	-0.00848***	(0.000)	-0.0181***	(0.000)
Other Backward Classes <sup>#</sup>	-0.00881***	(0.000)	-0.0132***	(0.000)
No. of Observations	193,012		124,706	

Source: Author's estimations based on NSSO 64<sup>th</sup> Round, 2007-08 and 71<sup>st</sup> Round 2014-15.

Note

1. Robust P-value in parentheses.
2. (#) dF/dx is for discrete change of dummy variable from 0 to 1.
3. Notation for significance level: \*\*\* significant at 1 per cent level (p<0.01), \*\* significant at 5 per cent level (p<0.05), \* significant at 10 per cent level (p<0.1).

It has also been observed that population from STs, SCs and OBCs groups has much less likely to the attainment of elementary education as compared to the general in both rounds. It was observed that the probability of achievement of elementary education had been improved across social groups indicated by a reduction in the corresponding probability. Among socially disadvantages groups, scheduled population has a much lower likelihood of having elementary education followed by OBCs at all times.

The probability of population with the attainment of secondary education also differs across social groups. The results for each social groups reported significant in both periods. It has analysed that individual from STs, SCs, and OBCs community have a lower probability of having the attainment of secondary education than a person belongs to the general community. However, their likelihood of having secondary education has improved over the period. Among social groups, it may be observed that STs Population has more disadvantaged groups in terms of attainment of secondary education followed by SCs and OBCs.

The probability of population with the attainment of senior secondary education across social groups is significantly lower than that of the general population in both rounds of the survey. It is observed that the person from scheduled tribes is relatively much less likely to have the attainment of senior secondary education as compared to SCs, OBCs and general. However, their chances to have the same achievement has increased. It is analysed that probability of OBCs community to have senior secondary education were significantly 1.34 per cent lower than general. However, they have a higher possibility than the scheduled population, and a little bit of improvement was observed in their coefficient in the current round. It has been found that variation in terms of attainment of senior secondary

Education exists across social groups, it might be the reason for that economic deprivation and poverty and non-attendance/ drop-out which are higher among the socially-disadvantage groups. Based on the estimate, it may be examined that the social background of a person significantly also matters in the attainment of senior secondary education but not as much as in elementary and secondary educational attainment. The following empirical results assess the influence of a person's caste on their attainment of senior secondary education in rural India.

Social backgrounds of the person have significantly negatively influenced on the attainment of higher education in both rounds, and it has been analysed that STs, SCs and OBCs have probably less chance to have higher degree and result indicates as there is a clear hierarchy of social groups in terms of differences in educational attainments. A wide disparity in educational attainment is prevalent among social groups. It may be due to the social and historical factors that produce vast inequalities for access to educational opportunities; in turn, it leads to differences in educational attainment across the social groups over the period. Various empirical studies confirm that the STs, SCs, and OBCs are disadvantaged social groups in terms of access to higher education over the periods. The reasons for low attainment of education among socio-religious disadvantage and economically backwards community, self-employed and casual labour could be lack of interest among parents in the education of their children or economic considerations, as the compulsion to work for augmenting the family income. It has been noted above that when we compare the educational attainments of the population across social groups, and we find a fairly significant difference in the proportion having a different level of attainment of education in rural areas.

**Table 6:** Result of Maximum Likelihood Probit Model for the levels of Educational Attainment in Urban Areas as per 64<sup>th</sup> and 71<sup>st</sup> NSS Round Surveys

NSS Survey	64 <sup>th</sup> Round		71 <sup>st</sup> Round	
	Coefficient	P-Value	Coefficient	P-Value
Elementary Education				
Scheduled Tribes <sup>#</sup>	-0.00314	(0.768)	0.0480**	(0.019)
Scheduled Castes <sup>#</sup>	-0.0535***	(0.001)	0.0411*	(0.086)
Other Backward Classes <sup>#</sup>	0.0338	(0.334)	-0.00685	(0.784)
Secondary Education				
Scheduled Tribes <sup>#</sup>	-0.0631***	(0.000)	-0.0307**	(0.039)
Scheduled Castes <sup>#</sup>	-0.00137	(0.912)	0.00439	(0.810)
Other Backward Classes <sup>#</sup>	-0.0382	(0.144)	0.0246	(0.220)
Senior Secondary Education				
Scheduled Tribes <sup>#</sup>	-0.0471***	(0.000)	-0.0520***	(0.000)
Scheduled Castes <sup>#</sup>	0.00465	(0.632)	-0.00690	(0.621)

Other Backward Classes <sup>#</sup>	-0.0237	(0.245)	0.00460	(0.774)
Graduation and Above Degree				
Scheduled Tribes <sup>#</sup>	-0.0693***	(0.000)	-0.0877***	(0.000)
Scheduled Castes <sup>#</sup>	-0.0232***	(0.007)	-0.0323**	(0.037)
Other Backward Classes <sup>#</sup>	-0.00496	(0.827)	-0.0505***	(0.002)
No. of Observations	111,328		97,084	

Source: Author's estimations based on NSSO 64<sup>th</sup> Round, 2007-08 and 71<sup>st</sup> Round 2014-15.

Note:

1. Robust P-value in parentheses.
2. (#) dF/dx is for discrete change of dummy variable from 0 to 1.
3. Notation for significance level: \*\*\* significant at 1 per cent level (p<0.01), \*\* significant at 5 per cent level (p<0.05), \* significant at 10 per cent level (p<0.1).

We have been noticed that attainment of education for urban areas is far better than their rural counterparts throughout the period. Given this, one can also expect that a higher probability of attainment of education in urban population is prevalent over the period as compared to their counterparts. In 64th round NSS survey, the result shows that among the social groups, only SCs have a significant effect in attainment to elementary education while that of STs and OBCs have reported insignificant result for the same. The population from scheduled groups have more chance for the attainment of elementary education than the general community in urban areas; this may lead to a favourable change in their status. Whereas results corresponding to OBCs again reported insignificant, meaning that OBCs are not significantly determined in the attainment of elementary education in urban areas. The person from SCs and OBCs do not have not significant coefficient and STs have a statistically negative coefficient in both rounds. So, the social background does matter in the attainment of secondary education among STs in urban areas.

Furthermore, the estimated coefficients for SCs and OBCs become positive but again reported not significant. It has estimated that the probability of having secondary educational attainment among urban STs are statistically improved over time. Thus, the empirical result gives insight to us that if a person belongs to SCs and OBCs groups, their achievement of secondary education did not significantly determine by their caste factor in urban areas. However, their status in terms of the same has improved. It has been noticed that various new institutions that came up during the past two decades, the drop-out rate for urban social groups has been declining for the urban areas. It has been assessed that urban population probably more advantage to having secondary education than their rural counterparts due to the favourable changes in education system related to a better quality of education in some schools and have adequate infrastructure, facilities and resources as well as a greater aspiration towards education. In urban areas, the probability for the attainment of senior secondary education among STs Population is 4.71 per cent lower than general, and their condition is getting worse, and now they have 5.20 per cent lower probability than general. STs have lower attainment of senior secondary education than the forward castes. However, it seems that this is mainly because of higher poverty incidence among STs. It has further been analysed that individual from both SCs and OBCs have been an insignificant result in both rounds. It means that the caste factor is not essential for SCs and OBCs in their attainment of senior secondary education. The marginal effects for an individual belonging to different social groups/castes for the attainment of graduation and above degree are significant in both survey rounds except OBCs in the previous round. It

has been observed that lower caste has a lower probability of the attainment of higher education, and probability for the same among each caste is reducing further. Thus, the caste factor also has a substantial effect on the attainment of higher education across social groups of urban areas. For example, regarding general community (*i.e.* non-SCs/STs/OBCs), the person belonging to STs has 8.77 per cent lower probability followed by OBCs (5.05 per cent) and SCs (3.23 per cent) to have graduation and above degree.

**Conclusion**

From the following discussion, we can say that education is the most crucial tool for social, economic and political transformation. For example, a well-educated individual, having the relevant knowledge, attitudes and skills play an essential role in the socio-economic development of the country. Therefore, education is the most influencing variable for socio-economic mobility and a reliable mechanism for bringing equality and justice in society.

It has been found that there is a cumulative improvement in the percentage of the social groups' population with different categories of educational attainment in both sectors over the period. Consequently, the number of illiterate people have been declining across social groups in both regions. However, social groups' population in rural regions in terms of educational attainment still lags behind their urban counterparts for the same. It has been found that a large proportion of social groups population have a low level of educational attainment, although increment has been found in the proportion of people with higher categories of educational attainment in both regions. Despite the improvement in the status of educational attainment of STs, SCs and OBCs, the difference between the scheduled population and non-scheduled population is noticeable. Educational attainment of the scheduled groups is far below the educational attainment of their counterparts in both regions. It means that the general population are educationally the most progressive groups with respect to the attainment of education. It is observed that the financial incentives and other measures (such as reservation policies) have a significant effect on the rates of participation of the scheduled population in education, but still, they have a long way to go. In short, despite considerable quantitative progress, exclusion remains a depressing feature of the educational scenario of SCs/STs. Therefore, inter-groups variation in educational attainment is persisting across the country over the periods. Caste has a significant effect on the levels of educational attainment, particularly in rural areas when it comes to the urban areas, it has only effect on the higher level of educational attainment. Our finding is consistent with the study of Jha and Pooja, (2009)<sup>33</sup>,

Borooah, Vani K (2012) <sup>[34]</sup>. We have observed that from the earlier days, some sections of the population, particularly women of each social groups and both men and women of the lower caste groups have been excluded from the education system. When India got Independence, to bring education to all has become a priority for the government. However, discrimination based on caste and gender has been a significant hindrance in the healthy development of Indian society. In viewing these obstacles, an enormous quantum of resources has been dedicated to expanding education sector to make it accessible to each group of the society. During the last 40 years, extensive infrastructure has been created in the education sector. It has been observed that special interventions and strategies (viz, mid-day meal, free education, and scholarships, etc.) have been adopted by governments to include girls, SCs/STs/OBCs children. Due to which, there has been a considerable achievement in access to education in India, particularly in higher education over the years. In spite of this, there are children of different caste/groups who have historically remained excluded from education due to various reasons. For some of them, schools/institutions are genuinely outside their reach in physical terms. Some others fail to join the school, even if it is available in the neighbourhood, due to social and economic reasons. Some join the school, but never physically participate in the education process and because of which educational attainment among the social groups remains unsatisfactory. It has been found that most of the children, who are enrolled, are unable to even complete secondary education due to some cultural and financial constraints. The drop-out rates are much higher for students belonging to the socially disadvantaged/backwards groups like scheduled children as compared to general category.

It is concluded that there has been significant improvement in education in terms of accessibility and attainment among social-disadvantaged groups of the country; consequently, it may enhance the inclusive growth. It can be concluded that if inequalities in access to education exist that will lead to socio-economic disparities in society. We have found that a larger share of educational assistance goes to backward castes and scheduled students and even though the proportion of students getting financial incentive is more among economically backward castes and scheduled than that of general, this may not be able to compensate for their foregone earnings of receiving education or perhaps not sufficient to supplement high-cost education. So the solution lies not in the provision for subsidised or free education, but in removing poverty at home. The policy-makers in India concentrated their attention on school reforms only. A shift in strategy is necessary for schools to homes. This may solve the problem of inequality in educational opportunity and inequality in educational attainments. If these twin issues are solved effectively, the other twin problems of inequality in the labour market and disparity in earnings will get automatically resolved.

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