

A Study on Social Equity in the Education System: Exploratory Study in the Indian Education System Context

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ABSTRACT

Indian education system promotes social equality, embraces an inclusive learning environment, and adheres to a heterogeneous classroom. Besides, social equity in the education system could occur due to gender disparities and inadequate funding. In addition, the Indian government, in terms of providing social equity, aimed to significantly rectify the historical, cultural, and gender inequalities to promote equal educational opportunities for all structures regardless of their background. Furthermore, the digital divide amplifies existing disparities, as socioeconomically disadvantaged children face little or no access to online educational resources during the pandemic. Addressing these difficulties necessitates the implementation of comprehensive policy reforms, augmented financial allocation, active involvement of the community, and an unwavering dedication to the principles of social justice.

Keywords- Inclusive learning, Heterogeneous classroom, Gender disparities, Cultural inequalities.

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The education system in this era focuses on social equity and equality. India is diverse, and the Indian education sector adheres to social equity, which is part of ethical concerns. Social equity in the education system defines fairness and fair opportunities for all students, regardless of student socioeconomic status, and race. In India, due to the presence of diverse cultures and religions, it is challenging for the education sector to provide a syllabus that can highlight the social culture of each culture's historical past and beliefs, although the

Indian government adheres to policy to provide education equality for all students. As illustrated by Adams *et al.* (2022), the Indian educational system and policy significantly eliminate disparities in accessing educational resources and outcomes; on the other hand, the As per the notion of Venet (2021), India, due to its diverse population in term of redesigning the syllabus for promoting social; quality faces unique challenges, for diverse types of caste-based discrimination, as well as economic disparities, and regional variations. In addition, to promote equality, the government of India focuses on adequate funding, curricula, and quality teaching staff to narrow the education gap.

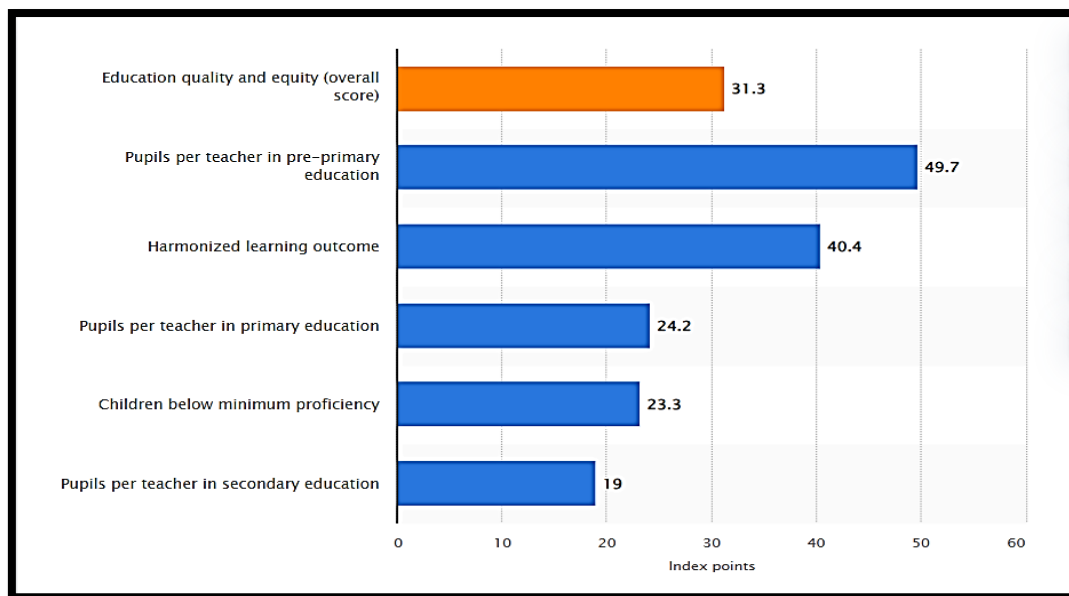


Figure 1: Social mobility index based on education quality and equity in India in 2020 (Source: Statista.com, 2023)

The above figure highlights the social mobility index based on education quality and equity in India in 2020. As per the notion of Chapman *et al.* (2022), the endeavors aimed at achieving social fairness in the education field in India cover many factors. Government efforts such as reservation rules and affirmative action aim to enhance the socio-economic status of marginalized communities by granting them more opportunities for admission into educational institutions. Specific measures are implemented to augment enrolment and retention rates for female students, students residing in rural areas, and students with disabilities. Therefore, India, to mitigate social inequality and to promote equity, adheres to dimension, and in this case, for the Indian education system, resources are of utmost importance in the pursuit of social equity. In addition, India's government adheres to a holistic approach in promoting social equity in the education system.

1.2 Problem Statement

Various issues lie in terms of social equity in the Indian education system. Caste inequality impedes fair access and opportunity in India's education system. This challenge needs to tackle deep-rooted biases and develop inclusive environments. Educational facilities, competent teachers, and resources are frequently concentrated in metropolitan regions, limiting access to quality education for rural students in India (Skubikowski *et al.*, 2023). Despite concerted attempts, there continues to be persistent gender inequality, particularly in rural areas in India in terms of education. Disparities in teaching standards and curriculum quality across different regions pose a significant obstacle to achieving educational equity. In addition, these are the significant issues that lie in terms of promoting social equity in the education system in India.

1.3 Aims and Objectives

1.3.1 Aims

This study aims to investigate social equity in the Indian education system and highlights various aspects of it.

1.3.2 Objectives

- To investigate the role of social equity in promoting education quality in the Indian education system
- To identify various factors that influence in promoting of social equity in the Indian education system
- To identify various challenges that the Indian government faces in terms of promoting social equity in the Indian education system
- To recommend how Indian government can enhance social equity in the education system and mitigate the challenges

1.4 Research Questions

- What is the significant role of social equity in promoting education quality in India?
- What are the various factors that influence in promoting of social equity in the Indian education system?
- What are the various challenges that the Indian government faces in terms of promoting social equity in the Indian education system?
- How can the Indian government enhance social equity in the education system and mitigate the challenges?

1.5 Significance

Adherence to social equity is essential in terms of promoting education quality and other aspects. In addition, this study highlights the importance of social equity and highlights the Indian education system's social equity and other significant and relevant aspects. In addition, this study's problem statement, aim,

objectives, and questions are aligned, which is also significant in terms of providing information on the study findings. In addition, this study's significance lies as it aids in opening a scope for future research to conduct further research on it.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Discussion of the Role of social equity in promoting education quality in Indian

In India, improving social equity significantly impacts raising educational standards. Social justice promotes an inclusive and varied learning environment by tearing down barriers related to socioeconomic position, caste, and gender. This method reduces dropout rates while simultaneously reducing educational inequities. Equitable chances for all students open the door to holistic growth, eventually improving the education standard (Aithal *et al.*, 2020). Furthermore, social justice promotes the distribution of resources for efficient learning and significantly improves education quality.

2.2 Investigate various factors that influence the promotion of social equity in the Indian education system

Social equity in Indian education is complicated, and poverty and resource inequality cause economic inequality as well as educational inequity (Jetly *et al.* 2019). Targeted financial help, scholarships, and resource allocation can alleviate these. Gender-based discrimination in many sections of the country necessitates measures to promote equal education for all genders. Affirmative action and inclusive policies

challenge India's caste system and impact educational equity. Poor infrastructure and instructional facilities make rural schooling difficult. Social equity in Indian education requires a multifaceted strategy.

2.3 Critically evaluates challenges that the Indian government faces in terms of promoting social equity in the Indian education system

The Indian government has a range of complex issues when it comes to fostering social fairness within its education system. Persistent socioeconomic gaps contribute to the perpetuation of inequitable access to high-quality education. Despite implementing affirmative action policies, the persistence of caste-based discrimination poses a significant obstacle to the educational prospects of marginalized communities (Sultana. 2019). The issue of gender bias is prevalent, particularly in rural regions, where girls encounter obstacles in terms of their ability to enroll in and remain in educational institutions. Equitable access to education is hindered by the presence of limited educational facilities and a dearth of teachers in rural places. Furthermore, it is worth noting that the curriculum frequently exhibits a deficiency in cultural variety and inclusivity, exacerbating feelings of alienation experienced by specific demographic groups. Bureaucratic inefficiencies and corruption pose significant obstacles to the successful execution of policies (Singh, 2019). The allocation of financing poses a persistent challenge, which in turn impacts the distribution of resources.

2.4 Discussion on an amicable solution to enhance social equity in the education system and mitigate the challenges

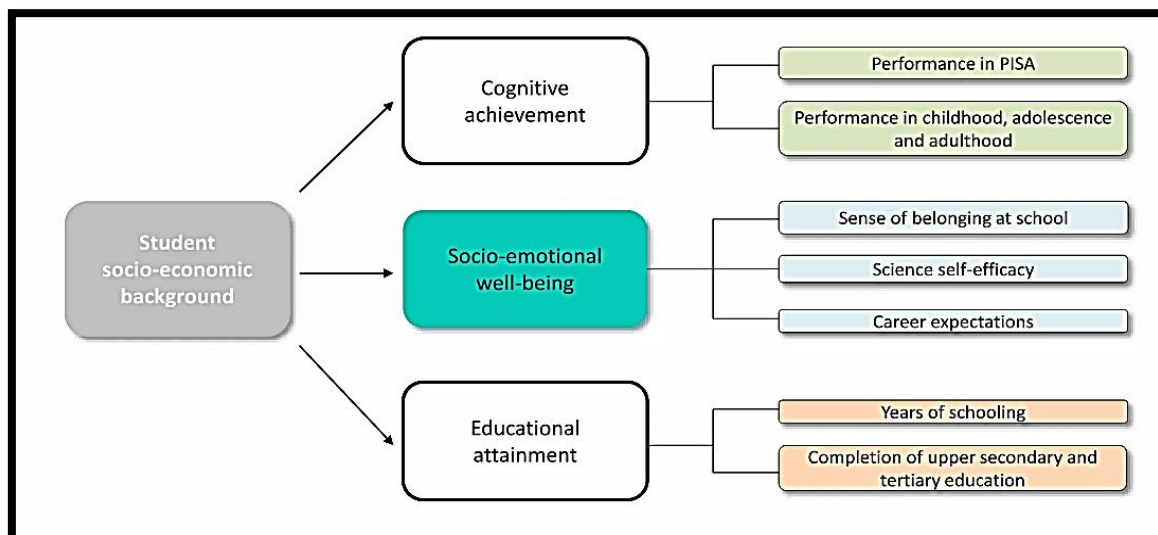


Figure 3: Social Equity factors (Source: Brinkmann, 2019)

The above figure highlights the factors of social equity, and it is important to note that a multifaceted approach is essential to address social equity challenges (Jetly *et al.* 2019). In addition, the amicable solution in

terms of enhancing social equity includes investments in infrastructure. It improves marginalized education policy by implementing inclusive curricula, strengthening enforcement of anti-discrimination laws, internet access,

collaboration with NGOs, accountable governance, and sustained commitment, which will help promote social equity.

2.5 Theoretical Application

Equitable Education Ecosystem Theory

Equitable Education Ecosystem Theory advocates a holistic approach to social equity in education. Accessible infrastructure, inclusive curricula, qualified teachers, and targeted resources are stressed, and this theory strives to create an environment where all students, regardless of socioeconomic background, caste, or gender, can thrive by cultivating all elements simultaneously (Gupta *et al.*, 2022). This method ensures a balanced and complete plan that promotes equal access, participation, and outcomes, creating social equality in education.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Philosophy

For this research, interpretivism philosophical assumptions were used, which aids in collecting and interpreting data in a subjective manner. The interpretivism philosophy directs the researcher to assess and interpret current literature on the topic matter, accumulating evidence and understanding subjective views (Majeed, 2019). Furthermore, this research has chosen this philosophy to gather information from secondary sources and to analyze, reflect, and contextualize.

3.2 Research Approach

The inductive research approach in secondary qualitative research involves gathering qualitative data as well as it highlighting the formulation of new possible hypotheses (Ruggiano *et al.* 2019). This research has been conducted with the aid of the inductive research approach.

3.3 Research Design

This study has followed a descriptive design to obtain accurate and systematic information on the selected topic. In addition, descriptive design is used to provide detailed information on the subject area through observational research.

3.4 Research Strategy

The present study has employed a qualitative research methodology to offer comprehensive insights into the issue under investigation. Utilizing the qualitative research strategy facilitates the implementation of a methodical approach for research, whereby current sources are methodically analyzed (Kingdon, 2020).

3.5 Data Collection Method

This research has been followed by secondary research for data collecting, allowing this research to gather information from previously published journals, articles, and case studies in a short period of time. Furthermore, this research used secondary data collecting to critically analyze the data's credibility and collect information on time.

3.6 Data Analysis

The study data has been structured and logically analyzed using a thematic analysis method. In addition, thematic data analysis helps to find, examine, and report themes within the data (Phutela *et al.*, 2020).

3.7 Ethical Consideration

Secondary qualitative research adheres to ethical norms, including maintaining anonymity, acknowledging sources of information, respecting the perspectives and values of individuals, providing accurate and relevant information, and ensuring the legitimacy of the site, journal, and article. The aforementioned guidelines are the established principles for doing secondary research that have been adhered to in this study.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Social fairness promotes education quality and accessibility, according to the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The NEP stresses social fairness and education quality:

Inclusive Access to Higher Education

The NEP intends to boost the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education to 50% by 2035, ensuring that marginalized and disadvantaged communities have equitable access. This diversity fosters new viewpoints and improves education (Aithal and Aithal, 2020).

Inequities

The NEP transforms stand-alone teacher education schools into interdisciplinary Higher Education schools (HEIs) to eliminate socio-economic inequities. This promotes a multidisciplinary approach to teacher education. The policy improves education by integrating teacher education into the university environment, which improves pedagogical techniques and teaching methodologies.

Equitable Resource Distribution

The NEP supports the National Research Foundation (NRF) to fund university and college research. Equity is prioritized by sponsoring underserved institutions. It distributes resources evenly, helping underfunded institutions.

Multidisciplinary Approach

Consolidating fragmented higher education institutions into Multidisciplinary Universities (MUs) and Multidisciplinary Autonomous Colleges (ACs) provides varied educational options under one roof. This strategy fosters social fairness by allowing students from diverse backgrounds to study a variety of disciplines, improving their education and employability.

Flexible Education Pathways

The NEP allows multiple exits from bachelor's and master's programmes. This can help disadvantaged students who work or have other obligations. The policy's flexibility makes education available to more kids, making it more egalitarian.

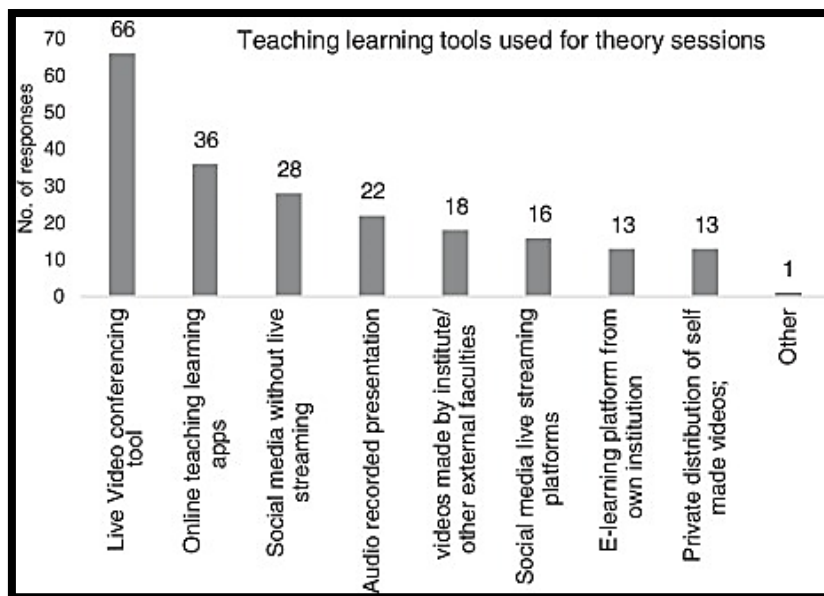


Figure 4: Mitigating social equity challenges in the Indian education system (Source: Rajhans et al. 2020)

Using e-learning to address social equity issues in Indian education requires a variety of solutions. To close the accessibility gap, NGOs or governments must provide devices and internet connection to economically disadvantaged pupils. Student backgrounds and learning styles require customized learning materials. Online learning objectives simplify comprehension. Taped courses and asynchronous options are essential to accommodate different schedules and time zones. Online quizzes, polls, conversations, and group activities build community and active learning. E-learning solutions accommodate diverse learning styles, and clear communication channels help students navigate online platforms and tasks. Assignments, quizzes, and projects ensure a fair assessment. Virtual student support services, counseling, technical assistance, and teacher-student interactions enhance e-learning. Collaborative learning through group projects and discussion forums enriches education. E-learning can narrow the social equality gap by providing high-quality education to everybody.

V. CONCLUSION

The Indian education system's quest for social equality is complicated, so for a just and inclusive society, all students must have equal access to high-quality education. Reservation legislation, affirmative action, and National Education Policy measures have promoted socioeconomic fairness in education in India. Caste, gender, regional, and resource inequality exist. These obstacles prevent an egalitarian education system. The pandemic's digital divide exacerbates these imbalances. These issues demand policy reforms, resource allocation, curricular inclusion, teacher training, and community involvement. The Equitable Education

Ecosystem Theory emphasizes accessible infrastructure, inclusive curricula, competent teachers, and targeted resources to guide these efforts. Therefore, e-learning may potentially fill education gaps in India. It can help marginalized, and disadvantaged students get a good education by offering flexible and personalised learning. In order to fully benefit from e-learning, device, and internet access, customised learning materials, assessment fairness, and student support services must be addressed. Therefore, social fairness in Indian education has improved, but more has to be done. India can achieve a truly fair and inclusive education system that empowers all its residents by implementing comprehensive policies, tackling difficulties, and adopting creative solutions.

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