



INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES AND INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

(Peer-reviewed, Refereed, Indexed & Open Access Journal)

DOI : 03.2021-11278686

ISSN : 2582-8568

IMPACT FACTOR : 8.031 (SJIF 2025)

Caste-ism and effect of drop-outs in higher Educational institutes and Nation building process

Jahnvi Chaudhary

Student,
Amity Institute of Social Sciences,
Amity University,
Noida (Uttar Pradesh, India)
E-mail: jchy233@gmail.com

Dr. Anna Nath Ganguly

Asst. Professor,
Amity Institute of Social Sciences,
Amity University,
Noida (Uttar Pradesh, India)
E-mail: anganguly@amity.edu

DOI No. **03.2021-11278686** DOI Link :: <https://doi-ds.org/doilink/04.2025-99926284/IRJHIS2504024>

ABSTRACT:

In India, casteism is a strongly ingrained social order that still affects many facets of life, including success in and access to higher education. In many communities, caste-based prejudice is still a major obstacle to obtaining an education, especially in higher education. This study looks at how caste-based exclusion affects student dropout rates and how it affects the process of nation-building more broadly. The study investigates how institutional impediments, socioeconomic disadvantages, and systemic biases cause underprivileged students to feel alienated, which in turn increases dropout rates. It also investigates the relationship between high dropout rates in Indian higher education institutions and discrimination based on caste. It looks at how these dropouts impede the process of nation-building by sustaining social and economic inequality, especially among oppressed caste groups. casteism has a major impact on dropout rates, which hinder India's efforts to promote social cohesiveness and inclusive development. In order to combat caste-based discrimination in higher education and promote a more fair society, the project ends with policy proposals in nation building process.

Keywords: casteism, dropout

INTRODUCTION:

With more than 1,000 universities and more than 40,000 colleges, India has one of the biggest higher education systems in the world. The foundation of a democratic, just, and forward-thinking society is education, according to the writers of the Constitution. They held that advancing social fairness, advancing democracy, and propelling economic growth all depended on an educated populace. It was believed that education was a potent instrument for empowering people and bridging social gaps. It was acknowledged that attaining the objectives of justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity required education.

Education has changed throughout the years to accommodate the nation's shifting requirements, but its essential role in determining India's destiny has not altered.

The system suffers from high dropout rates in spite of its extensive infrastructure, especially for students from marginalized caste groups including Scheduled Castes (SC's), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and Other Backward Classes (OBCs). A centuries-old social stratification system, casteism still has a big influence on who can get a college education and how well they do there. This study aims to investigate the connection between casteism and higher education dropout rates, as well as the wider ramifications for India's process of nation-building.

Casteism In India:

A social structure known as casteism places people into groups according to their place of birth. A person's social standing is determined by the caste they were born into under the Indian caste system, which is regarded as a closed system of stratification. The Hindu text Manu Smriti is cited as the source of the Indian caste system. Dalits are the outcasts of the four castes that make up the caste system: Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudras.

The occupation of an individual defined their caste stratification.

- Dalits worked in sanitation
- Vaishyas were traders and shudras were laborers
- Brahmins were priests and teachers,
- Kshatriyas were warriors and kings.

The caste system created a hierarchy in which untouchability and other human rights violations were inflicted on the lower castes and outcasts. The Dalits (formerly known as "Untouchables") fall below these four groups and have long been subjected to harsh discrimination and exclusion from social, economic, and educational possibilities.

Casteism persists in many facets of Indian society, including education, in spite of affirmative action initiatives and constitutional clauses intended to lessen prejudice based on caste. According to studies, students from underrepresented caste groups frequently experience economic challenges, social isolation, and prejudice, which impairs their academic performance and raises the dropout rate.

Sociological aspect of caste system:

One of the world's oldest and most intricate social structures is the caste system in India. The caste system, which has its roots in ancient Hindu texts, has changed over thousands of years and impacted almost every facet of Indian life.

The caste system can be viewed as a way to organize society and uphold social order from a structural-functional standpoint. Every caste contributes to the general operation of society through its distinct tasks and obligations. This viewpoint does, however, also draw attention to the caste system's malfunction, which limits social mobility and sustains inequality. According to the conflict

perspective, the caste system is a social stratification mechanism that favors the dominant castes (Kshatriyas and Brahmins) at the expense of the inferior castes (Dalits and Shudras). This viewpoint highlights the caste system's underlying power dynamics and exploitation, as well as the underprivileged castes' fight for equality and justice.

The everyday interactions and meanings connected to caste are the main emphasis of the symbolic interaction viewpoint. It looks at how social interactions, customs, and symbols are used to create and preserve caste identity. This viewpoint also looks at how caste affects a person's identity and sense of self

Role of Education and Nation-Building:

The process of creating a national identity and promoting social cohesiveness, economic growth, and political stability is referred to as nation-building. Since education gives people the ideals, information, and abilities they need to contribute to society, it is essential to the development of a nation. However, by sustaining social and economic disparities, the nation-building process is hampered when particular groups are often denied access to educational possibilities.

In addition to denying people the chance to raise their socioeconomic standing, India's high dropout rates among underprivileged caste groups impede the nation's progress toward inclusive development. India can go closer to accomplishing its nation-building objectives by tackling the underlying causes of dropout rates, including discrimination based on caste.

The role of education in fostering democratic values and economic development:

The ancient Varna system, which divided society into hierarchical groupings according to occupation and social standing, is where caste-based discrimination in India has its origins. With thousands of sub-castes (jatis) and the marginalization of Dalits (formerly known as "Untouchables"), who were shut out of the hierarchy and subjected to extreme social and economic exploitation, this system gradually developed into a strict social framework. In the past, caste shaped a system of ingrained inequality by dictating not only a person's profession but also their access to resources, education, and social connections. These divides were further solidified during the colonial era when caste identities were institutionalized and legislated by British rulers. With affirmative action measures like reservations in employment and education, as well as legal safeguards against caste-based violence and untouchability, India's Constitution aimed to eradicate caste-based discrimination after independence. Nevertheless, caste-based prejudice still exists in modern-day India in spite of these policies, taking many different forms in the political, social, and economic domains. For example, social stigma, financial limitations, and institutional biases are still obstacles that underprivileged caste groups must overcome in higher education, which results in lower enrollment and greater dropout rates. Caste-based discrimination is still prevalent today, both in urban settings where it affects social networks and economic prospects and in rural communities

where it frequently determines access to resources like land and water.

Caste is still a major political issue in elections, as political parties frequently mobilize voters along caste lines, strengthening caste identities rather than bridging them. Although traditional caste structures have been partly weakened by urbanization and globalization, caste-based discrimination is still a major problem that affects millions of people's lives and impedes India's progress toward social justice and equality. A holistic strategy is needed to address this problem, integrating social, educational, and legal initiatives to dispel ingrained biases and advance inclusive growth.

Socio-economic factors that contribute to dropout rates among marginalized caste groups:

Economic Hardship: Many students from marginalized caste groups reported that financial constraints were a major barrier to continuing their education. The cost of tuition, books, and other expenses were often prohibitive, leading them to drop out and seek employment to support their families.

Social Exclusion: Students from marginalized caste groups often faced social exclusion and discrimination within higher education institutions. They reported being treated differently by peers and faculty, which negatively impacted their academic performance and mental health.

Lack of Support Systems: Many students highlighted the lack of support systems, such as mentorship programs and counseling services, as a significant challenge. Without adequate support, they struggled to navigate the academic and social challenges of higher education. Deeper insights into the socio-economic and psychological factors that contribute to dropout rates among marginalized caste groups.

Psychological factors that contribute to dropout rates among marginalized caste groups:

Psychological factors significantly contribute to the high dropout rates among marginalized caste groups in higher education. One of the key issues is

persistent stress and anxiety-resulting from caste-based discrimination. Many students experience social exclusion, humiliation, and even direct harassment, which leads to feelings of isolation and emotional distress. This ongoing psychological strain negatively impacts their academic performance, increasing the likelihood of dropping out.

impostor syndrome, where students feel out of place in prestigious educational institutions due to deep-rooted societal prejudices. This results in low self-esteem, self-doubt, and a lack of confidence, making it challenging for them to fully participate in academic life.

Limited peer and faculty support- further worsens the situation, as marginalized students often struggle to find mentors, role models, or supportive peer groups, leading to a lack of motivation to continue their education.

Fear of failure combined with financial burdens- intensifies their psychological distress. Many students feel immense pressure to succeed for their families, and any academic struggles can lead to

guilt and feelings of inadequacy, pushing them toward leaving their studies

CONSEQUENCES OF DROPOUTS ON NATION BUILDING DUE TO CASTEISM IN INDIA IN HIGHTER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE

Caste-based discrimination in higher education institutions leads to a rise in dropout rates, significantly impacting India's nation-building efforts.

One of the primary consequences is the **loss of human capital**. When students from marginalized backgrounds leave their education due to discrimination, the nation misses out on skilled professionals, innovators, and future leaders who could have contributed to various fields. This weakens the labor force and hampers economic progress.

Additionally, it **worsens socio-economic disparities**. Education is a crucial means of social mobility, and when Dalits, Adivasis, and other underprivileged groups are unable to complete their studies, they remain trapped in cycles of poverty and exclusion. This stagnates the country's overall socio-economic advancement.

Caste-based dropout rates also **disrupt social harmony**. Discrimination within educational institutions breeds frustration and resentment, leading to protests and movements, such as those sparked by the Rohith Vemula case. Such unrest weakens the democratic structure and creates instability within academic environments.

Another key impact is the **decline in innovation and intellectual diversity**. A thriving education system relies on diverse perspectives, and the exclusion of marginalized students results in a limited range of ideas and solutions. This negatively affects research, technological advancements, and policy development.

Furthermore, caste-driven dropouts **harm India's global image**. As the country aspires to be a global leader in education and knowledge production, the exclusion of marginalized communities highlights issues of inequality and discrimination, raising concerns about inclusivity and human rights.

Addressing these challenges requires urgent policy reforms, institutional changes, and a shift in societal attitudes. Eliminating caste-based discrimination in education is not just about ensuring individual rights—it is a crucial step toward fostering national development, economic growth, and a more equitable society

CASE STUDY RELATED TO DROP OUTS IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS DUE TO CASTEISM

ROHIT VEMULA- FOREGROUNDING CASTE OPERATION IN INDIA AND EDUCATION INSTITUTES

In April 2021, a professor from the Indian Institute of Technology verbally abused students belonging to Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe communities. The incident brought to the fore

conversations around caste and education. One is instantly reminded of how five years before this incident, in 2016, Rohith Vemula, a Dalit PhD scholar at the University of Hyderabad, died by suicide. Between 2016 and 2021 itself, India lost several students belonging to Dalit and Bahujan communities to suicide as a result of caste-based discrimination. That elite Indian higher education institutions practise caste-based discrimination is nothing new. But Vemula's death sparked a political movement.

Dalit scholar's protest exposes casteism in India's higher education:

The protest has largely been ignored by the mainstream Indian media, which is often perceived as being run by privileged castes.

Editor's note: This article contains references to suicide and suicidal ideations that may be triggering for some readers.

"I refuse to be another institutional murder," Dr Ritu Singh, 29, stated resolutely while standing outside the gate of the Delhi University campus in New Delhi. Dr Singh, a former assistant professor at the university's Daulat Ram College was abruptly terminated in 2020.

She has been protesting her for close to 200 days now, gathering substantial support from student organisations, caste academics and political figures. The Dalit academic, who holds a doctoral degree in psychology, alleges that she was a victim of caste discrimination by the college and university administration. Dalits, situated at the lowest tier of Hinduism's intricate caste hierarchy, have been systematically denied basic civil liberties. As per Singh, her dismissal stemmed from caste-based discrimination, accusing college principal Savita Roy of targeting her due to her Dalit identity. The school principal, Savita Roy, presented a letter in court alleging dissatisfaction and disruption from students taught by Dr Ritu. However, it was later discovered that Dr Singh had never taught the 35 students

Role of education institute in addressing casteism drop outs in higher educational institute:

Higher education institutions have a vital responsibility in tackling caste-based dropouts by fostering an inclusive, supportive, and discrimination-free academic environment. Their proactive measures can significantly reduce caste-based barriers and promote equal educational opportunities for marginalized communities.

Enforcing Anti-Discrimination Measures:

Colleges and universities should implement strict policies against caste discrimination to ensure that all students, regardless of their caste background, are treated with fairness and respect. Establishing grievance redressal cells dedicated to addressing caste-related complaints can help students report issues and receive necessary support.

Offering Financial and Academic Assistance:

Economic challenges often force students from marginalized communities to drop out.

Institutions can mitigate this by providing scholarships, tuition waivers, and financial aid programs. Additionally, academic support systems such as remedial classes, peer tutoring, and bridge courses can help students overcome educational hurdles and succeed in their studies.

Promoting an Inclusive Curriculum and Awareness Programs:

Incorporating subjects on caste discrimination, social justice, and equality into the academic syllabus can help raise awareness among students and faculty. Organizing workshops, seminars, and sensitization programs can further foster an environment of mutual respect and inclusivity.

Ensuring Representation and Mentorship Opportunities:

A diverse faculty and administrative staff that includes members from marginalized communities can contribute to a more inclusive learning environment. Furthermore, mentorship programs pairing disadvantaged students with experienced faculty or senior peers can provide guidance, motivation, and academic support.

Creating Safe and Inclusive Campus Spaces:

Educational institutions should establish platforms where students can freely express concerns without the fear of discrimination. Student-led organizations, cultural events, and diversity committees can help foster solidarity, reduce caste-based stigmas, and promote social integration.

Strengthening Career Guidance and Mental Health Support:

Colleges should offer career counseling services to help marginalized students explore job opportunities and develop professional skills. Additionally, providing mental health resources and trained counselors can help students manage stress caused by discrimination, thus reducing dropout rates.

Holding Faculty and Administration Accountable:

Educators and administrative staff must be trained to recognize and address caste-based biases effectively. Regular sensitization programs and strict enforcement of anti-discrimination policies will contribute to a fairer and more equitable academic environment.

By implementing these initiatives, educational institutions can play a crucial role in reducing caste-based dropout rates and ensuring equitable access to higher education. These efforts not only empower individuals but also contribute to national development, economic progress, and social harmony.

POLICY RECCOMENDATION FOR COMBATING EDUCATIONAL DROP OUT RATES

Suggestions for Policy:

The following policy suggestions are put forth in light of the study project's findings in order to combat prejudice based on caste and lower dropout rates in Indian higher education institutions: Provide more low-interest loans, grants, and scholarships to students from underrepresented caste groups. By doing this, more students will be able to complete their studies and the financial strain

will be lessened.

Anti-Discrimination rules: In higher education institutions, put strong anti-discrimination rules into place and enforce them. This entails establishing procedures for reporting and dealing with instances of prejudice as well as educating staff and faculty on caste sensitivity.

Support Systems: To help students from underrepresented caste groups deal with the difficulties of higher education, establish extensive support networks that include academic support centers, counseling services, and mentor-ship programs.

Campaigns for Awareness: Start campaigns to raise awareness of the value of diversity and education in higher education institutions. All students will benefit from a more welcoming and encouraging environment as a result.

Affirmative Action: To guarantee that underrepresented caste groups have fair access to higher education, strengthen affirmative action regulations. Increasing the representation of these groups in academic and administrative roles is one way to achieve this.

Community Engagement: Get involved with your neighborhood to spread the word about the value of education and the chances that students from underrepresented castes have. Students will be inspired to pursue and finish their studies by the supportive network that will be created as a result.

CALL TO ACTION:

A critical issue that requires immediate action is the continuation of caste-based discrimination and its effect on dropout rates in Indian higher education institutions. In addition to sustaining social and economic inequality, the exclusion of underprivileged caste groups from higher education impedes the process of nation-building. In order to combat casteism and lower dropout rates and promote a more inclusive and equitable society, this call to action describes the actions that people, communities, educational institutions, and legislators must do.

Campaigns for Public Awareness

Goal: Raise awareness of the negative impacts of high dropout rates in higher education and discrimination based on caste.

Activities: Start national initiatives to inform people about the detrimental effects of casteism and the value of inclusive education.

Utilize print, radio, television, and social media to share information and success stories of people from underrepresented castes who have surmounted educational obstacles.

Programs for Education

Goal: Include anti-discrimination education and caste awareness in school and university curricula.

Activities: Create and carry out educational initiatives that instruct pupils on the background and effects of the caste system.

Provide staff, instructors, and students with lectures and seminars on inclusivity and caste awareness.

Reduce Drop-Out Rates in Higher Education

Financial Support: Provide scholarships, fee waivers, and stipends to economically disadvantaged students to reduce financial barriers to education.

Academic Support: Offer remedial classes, tutoring, and counseling services to help struggling students stay on track.

Address Social Barriers: Create safe spaces and support systems for students facing caste-based discrimination, harassment, or social exclusion.

Strengthen the Role of Education in Nation Building:

Equity in Education: Ensure that every individual, regardless of caste or socio-economic background, has access to quality education. Education is the foundation of a strong and united nation.

Promote Research and Innovation: Encourage research on caste-based disparities and their impact on education and nation-building. Use data-driven insights to design effective interventions.

Community Engagement: Involve local communities in educational initiatives to foster a sense of ownership and collective responsibility.

National Unity: Emphasize the importance of unity in diversity through curriculum reforms, highlighting the contributions of all communities to the nation's progress.

Collective Responsibility:

Government: Allocate adequate resources and monitor the implementation of policies aimed at reducing caste-based discrimination and drop-out rates.

Educational Institutions: Foster an inclusive environment, free from bias and discrimination, and actively support students from marginalized communities.

Civil Society: Advocate for policy changes, raise awareness, and provide grassroots support to affected students.

Individuals: Challenge caste-based prejudices in everyday life and support initiatives that promote equality and inclusion.

Long-Term Vision:

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Align efforts with SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) to ensure inclusive and equitable education for all.

Nation Building: Recognize that a nation can only prosper when all its citizens have equal opportunities to contribute to its growth. Addressing casteism and reducing drop-outs are essential steps toward building a stronger, more cohesive society.

Conclusion:

In India, casteism continues to be a major obstacle to success and access to higher education, especially for underrepresented caste groups. In addition to denying people the chance to raise their

socioeconomic standing, these groups' high dropout rates impede the process of nation-building by sustaining social and economic disparities. In order to build a society that is more inclusive and egalitarian, caste-based prejudice in higher education must be addressed. A road map for lowering dropout rates and promoting a more inclusive nation-building process in India is provided by the policy proposals put forth in this research project. The fight against casteism and the high drop-out rates in higher education is not just a moral imperative but a necessity for nation-building. By working together, we can create an educational system that empowers every individual, regardless of their caste or background, to contribute meaningfully to society. Let us commit to building a nation where education is a tool for liberation, unity, and progress

Additionally, caste-based dropouts disrupt social harmony by fostering resentment and social unrest. Protests and movements arising from educational injustices reflect the deep-seated structural discrimination that continues to exist, weakening democratic institutions and civic stability. Moreover, the lack of diverse perspectives in academia and research hinders innovation and intellectual progress, as inclusive education fosters creativity and problem-solving from multiple viewpoints. The exclusion of marginalized communities from higher education also damages India's global image, as it raises concerns about equality, inclusivity, and human rights within the education system.

Addressing these issues requires urgent institutional reforms, policy changes, and societal awareness. Strengthening anti-discrimination laws, providing financial and academic support, ensuring diverse representation in faculty and administration, and fostering a supportive academic environment are critical steps in reducing caste-based dropout rates. A truly inclusive education system is essential for national development, economic growth, and social progress. Eliminating casteism from higher education will not only empower individuals but also contribute to building a stronger, more equitable, and prosperous India.

REFERENCES:

1. **Government Policies and Initiatives National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.** Highlights the importance of inclusive education and proposes measures to address social and economic disparities in access to education.
2. **Post-Matric Scholarship Scheme for SC/ST Students.** A government initiative to reduce drop-out rates among marginalized communities by providing financial support.
3. **Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989.** A legal framework to address caste-based discrimination and violence

Books:

4. Ambedkar, B. R. (1936). *Annihilation of Caste*.
5. A seminal work by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar on the need to eradicate caste for social and economic

progress.

6. Gupta, D. (2000). Interrogating Caste: Understanding Hierarchy and Difference in Indian Society.

Case Studies and News Articles:

Rohith Vemula Case (2016).

7. The Hindu, Indian Express, and BBC.
8. "Rohith Vemula's Suicide: A Symptom of a Larger Malaise" (The Hindu, 2016).
9. Suicide of Dalit Students in Indian Universities Reports on similar incidents, such as the suicide of Payal Tadvi on casteism in higher education
10. Thorat, S., & Newman, K. S. (2010). Blocked by Caste: Economic Discrimination in Modern India.
11. Government of India. (2021). All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE).
12. Nambissan, G. B. (2016). Exclusion and Discrimination in Schools: Experiences of Dalit Children.

