

Occasional Papers

Participation in Schooling and Household Work A Study of Scheduled Caste Girls in Mewat District of Haryana

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Participation in Schooling and Household Work

A Study of Scheduled Caste Girls in Mewat District of Haryana

B. K. Panda*

Abstract

The tendency among girls particularly belonging to the Scheduled Castes has been found to be low in their participation in education and this phenomenon of low participation, retention and irregularity in attending the schools is not something a new finding but a factor observed in many of the research studies and even the planners and policy makers have repeatedly stressed the need for improvement of such a situation among these girls. This form of low participation in education especially among the rural girls is much more conspicuous – generations after generations among the girl child particularly belonging to the Scheduled Castes. Whether this kind of a phenomenon is occurring among the girls of these disadvantaged groups or it can be termed as social reproduction or replication is the point of concern in this research paper.

The girl child not only in India but in most of the developing world is having the constraints of attaining satisfactory levels of schooling and regularity in their participation. Variety of incentive schemes such as scholarships, uniforms, free textbooks and notebooks, providing ration to parents (Bangladesh), food baskets (Panama), issue of oil tins to parents of girl child (Pakistan) and provision of bi-cycles (India) have been in practice in various countries in order to ensure retention and enrolment of girls in the schools. Despite provision of such incentives in most of the countries as well as in India, the enrolment and retention of girls in schools has remained unsatisfactory. Even for the entire world, this has posed a major challenge of covering 60 million girls, those who are not going to school (Save the Children; 2005).

An attempt has been made in this research paper, covering a rural village predominantly occupied by the Scheduled Castes, to understand various factors contributing exclusion in education as well as to ascertain whether the phenomenon of replication of the familial values is percolating down from one generation to another. This research paper is only a part of a larger study dominated by Scheduled Caste households in a rural village known as “Atta-Barota” of Mewat district in Haryana in India. The state of Haryana was selected due to its proximity to the National Capital for the study, in order to understand any impact due to its proximity to the national capital as well as any changes occurring in the social matrix of the village, especially the Scheduled Castes and their awareness for educating the girl child.

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Introduction

Prevalence of caste system in India is one of the most discriminatory forms of social stratification. The stratification system and subsequent hierarchy and divisions are based on birth rather than on occupation. In fact, this ascriptive form of difference determines the life chances and entitlements of an individual in Indian society, irrespective of one's individual initiative, aptitude, educational attainment or skills acquired during the working life. In other words, the world of work and the world of wealth coexist rather converge with each other, creating a strong nexus between caste and class, often erasing their differences. As a result, beyond the boundary of individual achievements and aspirations, benefits and burdens of society are shared by groups on the basis of family and caste lines. This has, in turn, created two definite groups, the privileged, twice born upper castes and the downtrodden or lowly classes. Constitutionally, this social difference was sought to be bridged through special efforts by identifying the marginalized classes as Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST). Various measures have been tried to bridge this gap over the years. Absence of education and lack of awareness forced the lower classes to work as manual labourers, many of them remaining working in unclean occupations for generations. Politically, the former, that is, the privileged elite due to their higher status gained more and more power and the latter, that is the downtrodden remained rather powerless and unorganized. However, since independence, the structure of constitutional democracy has opened up various new avenues, making it possible for them to move up the socio-economic ladder, as equality of opportunity and social justice have come to be recognized as the guiding principles of development planning in independent India. With the constitutional safeguards and protection as well as better educational and economic facilities act as motivating factors for upward social mobility, these safeguards made it possible for members of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes to be at par with non-scheduled population and enabled them to enter into mainstream of national life (Uplaonkar; 1982).

Continuous efforts are made by the government in order to provide possible opportunities to these categories so that they can utilize the benefits and overcome their oppression. By abolishing untouchability and discrimination on the basis of caste, creed

and religion, equality of access in education is considered as an important aspect of achieving equity and ensuring social justice through measures like free-ships, scholarships, incentives, attendance scholarships etc., besides affirmative action in the form of reservations in recruitment and promotion in jobs. Despite a variety of provisions, the outcome remained quite mixed. The differentials, however, remained in educational attainment and access to elementary and other levels of education which still persist. The caste still continues to obstruct the access of scheduled caste children to school and the quality of education they receive (Nambissan, B. Geetha & Sedwal, Mona, 2002).

According to Uplaonkar (1982), only a small proportion of Scheduled Caste students has been able to reap the benefits of higher education and consequently, the benefits of reservations, in organized labour market, for which educational qualifications are the major considerations. Some of the studies (Kumar, et. al., 2000) also showed positive indications of improvement in literacy and development of Scheduled Caste children. Some of the states have significantly improved their performance and have been successful in reducing the drop-out and wastage of children in schools, making considerable improvement in terms of their enrolment and participation. Kulkarni (2000) in his study in the states of Bihar, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh found that there is a widening disparity between other castes and Dalits in terms of school completion, while there is a narrowing in literacy and school completion rates between other castes and Dalits in some of the states such as Himachal Pradesh, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

While Anitha (2000) also showed positive impact in the school, if there is a good relationship between the school, the community and the teachers, on the other hand, there is evidence enough to show that the teachers in India are predominantly upper caste and bring their own understandings of the legitimacy of caste relations into the classroom. Scheduled Caste children are assumed to run errands and are assigned menial tasks such as sweeping and cleaning the classrooms. Besides it was also found that higher rates of teacher absenteeism were reported when children were mainly from the Scheduled Caste communities.” (Govinda, R. & Varghese, N. V., 1993; Kabeer, 2006). Be that as it may the inherent fear of the disadvantaged children towards the teacher, and their ability to establish a communication link with the teacher was also reflected in low attendance and

high drop-out rates (Sujatha, 1998) micro-level evidence shows that initiatives such as mid-day meals, self-help women's groups, environment building programmes, appointment of local community teachers, developing partnership between school and village communities in school management have helped the disadvantaged groups to realize the importance of education and adopt positive attitude towards girls' education (Sujatha, 2002).

Another study conducted by Kumar, Arora, Huria and Daya (2000) found that mid-day meals, free uniform, free textbooks, scholarships for attendance are widely availed by children of disadvantaged groups, but there is lack of satisfactory community participation through PTA and VEC. The participation of the girl child is found to be more, if the family members are educated and, more particularly, if the mother is literate (Vaidyanathan and Nair, 2001).

From the reviews it will be observed that the context of social replication or reproduction seems to be occurring in these disadvantaged groups of the society. This may be partially due to their backwardness, inability to cope up with the poor economic conditions and the societal constraints they are facing. The conditions in which they live might perhaps is there leading social replication to occur among Scheduled Castes, where the replication of backwardness and miseries with low levels of education and lower occupations have been found to taking place from generation to generations. Pierre Bourdieu (1973) emphasized the way in which schools reproduce social divisions based on wealth, privilege and power. The influence of society and family impact very strongly the children when they are getting their education. The aspirations of children also sometimes are restricted to their abilities, as in case of Scheduled Caste girls who only aspired for lower levels of education as well as employment, most probably understanding the constraints in which they are studying in the schools (Panda, B. K., 2010). The schools in these societies mostly act as transmitter not only of the cultural heritage of society but also the mechanism of social inequality (Bourdieu, 1973), while Apple (1982) argues that the school is an arena within which the inequalities of society are contested and where both reproduction and non-reproduction take place. The efforts thus made by the children with regard to educational attainment and social development

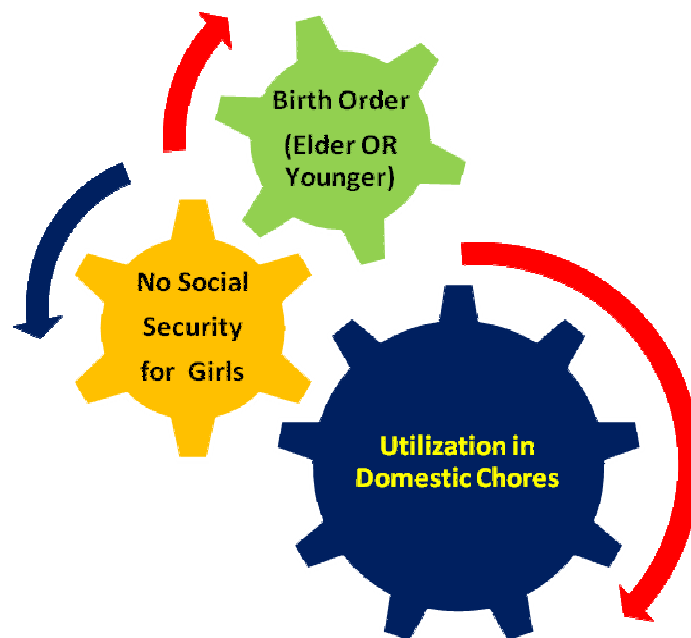
by the schools for social mobility can be visualized from the educational attainment a child acquires in the school.

The reviews which are although in brief, throw light on the impeding factors as well as the enabling factors for the development of the disadvantaged groups in general. The studies have examined various issues related to social and economic conditions vis-a-vis educational provisions and their utilization by the disadvantaged groups, highlighting their problems. A careful examination of the review provides an indepth understanding of the existence of inequalities, disparities, lack of motivation and awareness as well as social inhibition impeding the development of the Scheduled Castes. Yet, in spite of several best efforts, vast majority of Scheduled Caste children are still outside the reach of educational provisions, the benefits have no meaning for them. In this context, it is necessary to ascertain the congenial as well as enabling factors essential for raising the level of education of Scheduled Castes and for creating an urge/demand within to acquire education which is the only instrument to break the isolation and barriers in the society to pave way for social mobility (Aggarwal & Sibou, 1994). Considering the socio-economic backwardness of the Scheduled Castes, the Constitution of India envisaged special measures for their socio-economic uplift, especially their educational development. Several policies and programmes have been adopted by the central and state governments for their education development. There have been a variety of schemes such as scholarships, free uniforms, free books, free coaching, free boarding, free lodging and many other incentives in order to promote their welfare. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is also a very important intervention by the government in providing access, equality and quality to children of Scheduled Castes in the country (Govinda, R., 2002).

Studies also show that as most of these families belong to poor economic status, the capacity to educate their children becomes very difficult on their part as the family decision revolves around earning for their livelihood and survival. Accordingly, the families decide which child to be educated and which to be retained for household work, to facilitate their participation in certain economic activities and daily wage livelihood upon which they depend the most. Due to insecurity in their occupations/employment, they have to decide accordingly (Panda, B. K., 2010). It is also found that the education

of a particular child in the birth order is also foregone in order to compensate for the household chores or for looking after the siblings so that the parents can earn their livelihood which is their major priority compared to schooling etc. Another major setback for education of girls is that of lack of security when they go for high school studies, if the school is not located in the same village.

These underlying assumptions have also been proved by most of the studies in the rural areas of India where the Scheduled Caste population predominantly reside, where they take decisions according to their convenience so that the earning is not affected by educating the child. However, there are also studies which reveal that if the elder child (according to the birth order) is educated and particularly motivated as a school going child, the education of the other children younger to the child also participate actively in schooling and also get support in their learning process (Zajme et al.,1979). Contrastingly, studies also show that the parents forego the education of the elder child at the cost of the younger ones, who are sent to school for education, as the helping hand of the elder child is already utilized for the household chores.



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Figure: Wheel of vicious jigsaw cycle affecting educability of the Girl Child

Researches have also shown that Scheduled Caste women are the most economically deprived section of Indian society, although Scheduled Caste women constitutes the backbone of Indian agriculture economy; 71% of them are agricultural labourers, despite high levels of their economic contribution, 56% of Scheduled Caste women are also found suffering from some form of anaemia (Manorama, Ruth, 2000). The girl child belongs to this family of Scheduled Caste where she finds very difficult to come out of the jigsaw wheel of the society, revolving from wheel to wheel of problems and this, in turn, impedes her growth educationally and like her many of her peer group girls too lack their educability. The provision of employment guarantee, housing, free scholarships, free education and other such subsidies in the form of reservations etc are not able to diffuse the poverty, the insecurity and the dependency these communities face. The houses provided to them by the government are not sufficient and the money they get out of 100 days of employment cannot suffice for the rest of 265 days where they remain unemployed and the free scholarships etc also do not suffice to meet the cost on account of the expenditure to be incurred on each child at home despite the free service obtained in managing the household activities as well as the mid-day meal served which is not attractive and also not nutritious. Most of these families survive on few meals a day consumed just for filling their stomach rather than eating them for their being nutritious and healthy.

Basic Information about Education of the Scheduled Castes

The Scheduled Caste population of India constitutes 16.3% of the total population (2001 Census). The overall literacy rate for Scheduled Castes increased from a mere 2.3% in 1941 to 54.7% in 2001. Despite this impressive increase in the literacy in 2001, it remained less than the corresponding general literacy rate of India (65.6%). The perpetuation of inequalities even in terms of basic ability to read and write is thus alarmingly high. A look into the basic statistical information shows that the drop-out rates of the Scheduled Caste children are still high and the gross enrolment ratio is just satisfactory (Table 1). During the year 2007-08, the (Gross Enrolment Ratio) in the classes I-V was 124.93, for classes VI-VIII, it was 80.17, and for the classes I-VIII, it was 108.35 for the Scheduled Caste children (*See Table*). The GER remained satisfactory for

the Scheduled Caste children in the classes I-V with 124.93 but for the classes VI-VIII, it was low with 20.17. The drop-out rates for the Scheduled Caste children was 30.09 in the classes I-V, but it is very high with 52.47, in the classes I-VIII are taken together and still higher, that is, 68.42, if it is taken for classes I-X. There is a higher drop-out rate in the higher classes (Table 2).

Table 1
Gross Enrolment Ratios of General Population and Scheduled Castes in India

Gross Enrolment Ratio	General Population			Scheduled Castes		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
I – V	115.26	112.58	113.97	125.51	124.31	124.93
VI – VIII	81.48	74.36	78.06	82.67	78.08	80.17
I - VIII	102.36	98.02	100.28	109.31	107.30	108.35

Selected Educational Statistics, 2007-08

Table 2
Drop-out Rates of General Population and Scheduled Castes in India

Drop-out Rates	General Population			Scheduled Castes		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
I – V	25.70	24.41	25.09	34.37	24.52	30.09
I – VIII	43.72	41.34	42.68	53.56	51.12	52.47
I - X	56.55	57.33	56.71	68.05	68.90	68.42

Selected Educational Statistics, 2007-08

The Sample State of Haryana covered in the Study

The state of Haryana has a Scheduled Caste population of 32.50 lakhs (1991) and it has increased to 40.91 lakhs during (2001), thus constituting 19.3% Scheduled Caste population. The state of Haryana stands 5th in rank for its Scheduled Caste population in the entire country. The literacy rate for the state of Haryana is 67.9 % (70.8 for General and 55.4 for Scheduled Castes). The literacy rate of the state for the Scheduled Castes was 39.2 % during 1991 and increased to 55.4 % (Male: 66.9 and Female: 42.3) during 2001.

A look into the GERs of various levels of primary education in the state of Haryana and particularly that of the Scheduled Castes, it will be observed that for classes I-V, it is 119.98 and for classes VI-VIII, it is 81.37 which is low and in case of girls, it is 83.23 (Table 3). While the drop-out rates for the Scheduled Caste children in classes I-V

is 9.02, it is very high at the middle levels and the overall drop-out rate for classes I-X together is 60.33. The drop-out among the girls remains to be higher with 63.93 and for boys, it is 57.10 (Table 4).

Table 3
Gross Enrolment Ratio of General and Scheduled Caste Children of Haryana

Gross Enrolment Ratio	General Population			Scheduled Castes		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
I – V	87.61	93.78	90.40	115.65	125.08	119.98
VI – VIII	75.36	76.08	75.69	79.82	83.23	81.37
I - VIII	82.92	86.97	84.76	102.14	109.42	105.47

Selected Educational Statistics, 2007-08.

Table 4
Drop-out among General and Scheduled Caste Population of Haryana

Drop-Out Classes	General Population			Scheduled Castes		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
I – V	0.00	0.00	0.00	10.92	6.87	9.02
I - VIII	4.53	8.75	6.50	26.35	29.61	27.89
I - X	33.99	39.15	36.43	57.10	63.93	60.33

Selected Educational Statistics, 2007-08

Haryana is possessed with a network of educational institutions. Keeping in view the access dimension, a primary school is made available within in radius of one kilometer, middle level education facilities are available within a radius of 1.87 kilometers and high schools are available within a radius of 2.1 kilometers. There are 11,013 Primary Schools, 1,918 Middle Schools, 3,023 High Schools and 1,301 Senior Secondary Schools in the State. Presently, there are four Universities and 214 Colleges with 161 Colleges of general education and 53 institutions exclusively for women in the State.

Coverage of the Research Paper

The study was undertaken in the newly carved out district of Haryana which has majority of underdeveloped blocks with a sizeable population of Scheduled Caste children in the district. Mewat is primarily an agricultural district and majority of its population lives in rural villages. Mewat district has the lowest literacy rate of 37.58% with very low participation of children in the schools and more particularly by the

Scheduled Caste and Muslim minority children. This research paper is a part of the larger study where an entire village was covered and household survey of the whole village was carried out in order to understand the socio-economic situation and levels of education among the Scheduled Caste population of the entire village which was dominated by the Scheduled Castes.

Table 5
District-wise Population and Literacy Rates
of Scheduled Castes in the State of Haryana

Districts	Percentage of Population		Literacy Rate	
	General Population	SC Population	General Population	SC Population
Panchkula	84.5	15.5	75.9	63.4
Ambala	74.9	25.1	79.2	63.2
Yamunanagar	75.5	24.5	74.4	62.9
Kurukshetra	79.5	20.5	73.1	56.9
Kaithal	78.5	21.5	62.8	44.7
Karnal	79.0	21.0	71.3	53.8
Panipat	84.2	15.8	71.4	56.7
Sonipat	81.9	18.1	75.0	62.3
Jind	80.2	19.8	65.3	48.9
Fatehbad	72.6	27.4	64.1	41.0
Sirsa	73.4	26.6	67.2	41.4
Hissar	78.0	22.0	68.9	49.8
Bhiwani	80.4	19.6	70.1	56.3
Rohtak	80.9	19.1	77.0	59.5
Jhajjar	82.2	17.8	74.5	62.5
Mahendragarh	83.7	16.3	71.1	63.6
Rewari	81.1	18.9	76.7	68.7
Gurgaon	88.7	11.3	62.8	64.0
Faridabad	85.8	14.2	72.3	55.8
HARYANA	80.7	19.3	70.8	55.4

Note: Mewat and Palwal districts came up after 2005.

From the Table 5, it will be observed that eight districts of Ambala, Yamunanagar, Kurukshetra, Kaithal, Karnal, Fatehbad, Sirsa, Hissar are having a considerably large number of Scheduled Caste population in the state. Out of these districts Hissar, Kaithal, Fatehbad and Sirsa are having the lowest literacy rates among the Scheduled Caste population in the state of Haryana.

The predominantly rural blocks of Mewat district are also having lowest literacy rates of the Scheduled Castes. Out of the six blocks in the district, there are four blocks,

which are lagging behind in education with lowest literacy rates; these blocks are Ferozpur Jhirka, Punhana and Nuh. The Punhana block has 97.3% illiterate population, i.e., only 37.4% are literates in this block. Punahana has 87 inhabited villages, out of which 43 villages have Scheduled Caste population.

Since the formation of the state of Haryana during 1966, with 13 districts, the districts underwent reorganization several times and as a result at present there are 22 districts in the state. The newly formed districts are Palwal and Mewat. Mewat district was carved out from erstwhile Gurgaon and Faridabad districts, which came into existence on 4th April 2005, as the 20th district of Haryana. The newly constituted district comprises of three sub-divisions, namely Nuh, Firozpur Jhirka and Hathin. The district headquarter is located at Nuh. The district comprises of six blocks namely, Nuh, Tauru, Nagina, Firozpur Jhirka, Punhana and Hathin. There are 532 villages in the district, out of which 27 villages are either uninhabited or are under the jurisdiction of Municipal Committees. Geographically, Mewat district is situated between 26-degree and 30-degree North latitude and 76-degree and 78-degree East longitude. Gurgaon district bounds it on its North, while Rewari district lies to its West and Faridabad district to its East. On South, the district shares its boundary with Rajasthan. Mewat has also Aravali range of hills, thus, the Mewat's topography is evident from its patches of land with hills and hillocks of the Aravali Mountain, on the one hand, and plains, on the other.

However, with the creation of 22nd new district of Palwal, during 2008, the block of Hathin was shifted from Mewat to Palwal which has under its purview the 3 sub-divisions Palwal, Hodal and Hathin. With transfer of one of the sub-divisions, namely Hathin from Mewat to Palwal, the district Mewat at present is left with two sub-divisions of Nuh, and Firozpur Jhirka, and five blocks making the district administratively more viable to manage and implement various governmental programmes effectively. This district with two sub-divisions was created keeping in view the backwardness and low scope for development.

The Mewat region has a large number of weaker sections comprising minorities, backward communities and the Scheduled Castes who are solely dependent on agricultural labour and continue to remain as original inhabitants of the district. These

communities at present own some houses and patches of land, distributed by the government for their welfare and development. This region has no avenue for employment due to lack of any form of industries etc.

According to the Census of India 2001, the total population of Mewat district was 9,93,617, of which 46,122 (4.64%) live in urban areas and the major chunk 9,44,95 (95.36%) of the population live in rural areas. Out of the total population of 9,93,617, the district has 5,24,872 males and 4,68,745 females. The Scheduled Caste population in the district is around 78,802. The total number of households is 1,42,822, out of which 1,35,253 (95%) are in rural areas and remaining 7,569 (5%) are in urban areas. The total number of (Below Poverty Line) households in the district is 3,9,667 and that of (Above Poverty Line) households is 1,03,155.

The main occupation of the people of Mewat district is agriculture and allied agro-based activities. Animal husbandry is their secondary source of income. Inhabitants who live closer to the hilly ranges of Aravali also keep sheep and goats. Milk yield is not so low, but due to heavy indebtedness the income from milk is much reduced, as many farmers have to sell milk to the lender at lower than the normal price. The poultry population in Mewat is much less than in the rest of Haryana. 95.36 per cent of the people of Mewat district reside in rural areas while 4.64 per cent of the people reside in the urban fringes and urbanized areas. Agriculture of the district is dependent on rain and after the rainy season, cultivation work begins, as there is not much of water available in this district. A canal is there, which flows from Faridabad and Palwal districts and passes through Atta and Indri villages also providing some water for irrigation purposes, but this irrigation water source dries off during summers and no further agricultural activity can take place during these seasons. It may be noted that the total irrigation land available and utilized in the district is only 29.70 per cent.

The district of Mewat has 6 blocks, of which the blocks of Firozpur Jhirka and Nuh are the highly populated ones, followed by all the other blocks. Nuh, being centrally located, has most of the important administrative machinery such as the Mewat Development Agency (MDA) and other important government offices (Table 6). Again, the number of villages in these two blocks of Firozpur Jhirka and Nuh are the highest

with 146 and 119 villages in each of the block respectively. There are a total number of 531 villages in the district.

Table 6
Block-wise Information

S. No.	Particular	Nuh	Taoru	F.P. Jhirka	Punhana	Hathin	Total
1.	Area (in hect.)	46335	20359	53491	35072	35897	191154
	(i) Cultivated	35555	14409	42071	23515	31255	146805
	(ii) Uncultivated	10780	5950	11420	11557	4642	44349
2.	Population	212855	126169	243868	206858	203867	993617
3.	Tehsil	1	1	1	1	1	5
4.	Sub Tehsil	--	--	1	--	--	1
5.	Kanungo Circle	3	1	2	2	2	10
6.	Patwar Circle	30	12	32	19	21	114
7.	No. of Villages	119	84	146	96	86	531

Staff Strength in Government Schools of Mewat

The staff strength and position in various schools of the district is presented in Table 7. The vacant positions of teachers and school headmasters are the highest with 14 posts of Principals in the secondary schools lying vacant followed by 48 vacant positions of school headmasters in the primary and middle schools. More than 127 teaching positions in the higher schools and 403 positions of masters in the primary and middle stage schools are also found to be vacant in the district. In the absence of regular teachers in place, there is a provision of guest teachers to be appointed on temporary basis, therefore, the district administration has appointed 93 teachers and 307 masters for a specific period in the schools to ensure the proper functioning of these schools.

Table 7
Staff Position in Government Schools in the District of Mewat

S. No.	Name of the Post	Sanctioned Posts	Filled Posts	Vacant Posts	Guest Teachers
1	Principal	35	21	14	-
2	Headmaster	52	04	48	-
3	Teacher	292	165	127	93
4	Master	756	355	403	307

Source: District Education Office Records, 2008.

It may be noted that the district earlier had 6 blocks but at present it has only 5 blocks as the Hathin block has been shifted to another newly constituted district of Palwal. The district has in all 593 Primary schools, 101 Middle schools, 53 High schools, 35 Senior Secondary schools, thus comprising around 782 schools of all stages (Table 8).

Table 8
Block-wise details of Schools in Mewat District

S. No.	Block	Primary Schools	Middle Schools	High Schools	Sr. Sec. Schools	Total
1	Nuh	139	22	17	03	181
2	F. P. Jhirka	93	07	06	05	111
3	Nagina	86	13	08	01	108
4	Punhana	98	14	09	09	130
5	Taouru	85	20	05	06	116
6	Hathin	92	25	08	11	136
	Total	593	101	53	35	782

Source: District Education Office Records, 2008.

At the time of conducting the study, the district organized an enrolment drive in order to bring the out-of-school children to the schools. A total of 5,383 children could be brought to the school after the drive. However, there are still 13,806 out-of-school children who could not be brought to the school due to various reasons like poverty, higher age groups employment and participation in economic activities (Table 9).

Table 9
Special Enrolment Drive of 6-14 age group Children and existing Drop-out Children in the Mewat District

S. No.	Name of the Blocks	Special Enrolment Drive – Admitted Children	Out-of-school children after Special Drive
1	Hathin	313	2439
2	Tauru	614	317
3	Nagina	911	2423
4	F. P. Jhirka	1422	4503
5	Punhana	1242	1887
6	Nuh	881	2237
	TOTAL	5383	13806

Source: District Education Office, Mewat (31.7.08)

Education Levels of Parents and Schooling of Girls Covered in the Study

The data relating to educational levels of parents as well as girl children in the village was collected in order to understand their levels of participation in the school (Table 10). Data was collected from all the households, this provided information relating to levels of education of parents, both father and mother. It will be observed from the Table 10 that the heads of households, most particularly among the male members, around 24.5% are illiterate; 19.5% studied up to primary levels of schooling; 20.7% of the heads of households studied up to middle levels; 24.1% studied up to secondary level and very few studied beyond senior secondary and undergraduate levels. Majority of heads of households, particularly belonging to Scheduled Castes families had very limited schooling and either remained illiterate or pursued schooling only up to primary and middle levels of schooling. The heads of the families belonging to the other caste groups had also not pursued higher studies and had studied up to secondary schooling only. The status of most of the heads of households covered in the study shows that 50.6% of the heads of the households are working as agricultural labourers and 28.7% are working as daily wage labourers. And 33.7% of the households could spend only up to Rs.2,000/- per month on food etc.

Table 10
Head of the Family – Education Status

Education Status – Head of the Family	No. of Heads of Households	% of Heads of Households
Illiterate	64	24.5
Primary	51	19.5
Middle	54	20.7
Secondary	63	24.1
Senior Secondary	14	5.4
Undergraduate	8	3.1
Others	7	2.7
Total	261	100.0

The level of education among women of this village is much grimmer; majority of them are illiterate and the very concept of educated mothers can educate their children

better fails here in this village (Table 11). About 62.5 per cent of the women in the households, both from other castes as well as the Scheduled Castes, had not at all participated in schooling and remained hard core illiterates and had no knowledge whatsoever of education and schooling. They have never met the teachers because they felt incompetent to speak to them. Around 12.6 per cent of these women have gone to the school but discontinued as drop-outs during their primary level of education. Similarly, 11.5 per cent of women pursued education only up to middle level, while, there were 8.0 per cent of women who had studied up to secondary levels and 1.1 per cent had studied up to senior secondary. Just few had studied up to undergraduate level. None of the women as well as men has studied above graduation and other higher levels of education. It will be observed from the information made available by the villagers that majority of the heads of the households as well as their women folk did not pursue higher studies. They could only study up to the primary or at the best middle levels and then dropped out and settled. This may be due to the fact that the village had only a primary school, which is within the reach of the villagers and as there were no high schools in the past, as such they did not go for higher education. However, at present the village has a high school and this has enabled many of the families to send their children to the high school, but for further higher education, the parents have to send them to a nearby town and also spend money on account of transportation etc, which is not found to be possible on the part of the Scheduled Caste families, while the land owning families did prefer higher studies for their children; but their children did not fare well in education and dropped out of their studies. The women are not holding any regular employment and stated to be housewives (95.0%); however, during the agriculture season, they are reported to assist as wage labourers in the field.

Data relating to education of the children according to their birth order was collected in order to understand whether the elder or the first born child is mostly kept out of schools to help the family in their household work, as well as to understand the fact that if the elder child studying in the school encouraged the younger siblings to go to the schools and provided assistance in terms of learning at home in the absence of any guidance from their parents who are either preoccupied in their jobs or are not literate enough to teach the children. Owing to inability of most of the families to afford private

tutions, it is not possible to spend on account of tuitions and the children have to study on their own and depend on the teachers for carrying out their home work as well as clarify their doubts etc in the school itself. It was also found during the discussions with the girl children in the schools that the children having an elder brother or a sister did get help from them in their studies and those who did not have a literate elder brother or a sister had to depend on their peer group as they are not so confident to ask the teachers to clarify their doubts.

Table 11
Education Status of the Women (Wife of the Head of Household)

Education Status of Women	% Women of households
Illiterate	62.5
Primary	12.6
Middle	11.5
Secondary	8.0
Senior Secondary	1.1
Undergraduate	.8
Others	3.4
Total	100.0

The information relating to number of children in each of the household was collected along with their levels of education in order to understand the extent of education of the children (Table 12). An attempt was also made to understand the gender of the children and their levels of schooling so that effective participation of a girl child in the schools can be ascertained. The data indicated that families had up to 3-6 children; however, the number of families having a much higher number of children is not very large. Majority of the families had children up to 3 in a family. It will be observed that the families having a first child comprised 236 children with 162 boys and 74 girls; the number of girls remained very low, in case of families having second child is 180 children, with 99 boys and 81 girls; families having a third child constituted 136 children, with 90 boys and 46 girls; families having a fourth child constituted 64 with 37 boys and 27 girls; families with 5th child comprised 29 children, with 12 boys and 17 girls; and the

families having six children comprised 11 children, with 5 boys and 6 girls. Thus, it will be observed that the population of the boys is higher or double the population of the girl child, with 405 boys and 251 girls constituting 656 children in the households.

Table 12
Number of Children in the Village by Birth Order

Gender of the Child	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4	Child 5	Child 6	Total
Son	162	99	90	37	12	5	405
Daughter	74	81	46	27	17	6	251
Total	236	180	136	64	29	11	656

The levels of education of the children was also collected from the households in order to understand the levels of schooling provided to the children and more particularly to understand the levels of education a girl child has obtained (Table 13). As regard to the first child of the families, around 42 children remained illiterate and in case of the second child, up to 12 have remained illiterate. Thus around 66 children belonging to various birth orders remained illiterate and never attended any kind of schooling. The families had educated their children either up to primary or middle level, this constituted majority of the children, with 421 both boys and girls, the children who studied up to secondary and higher secondary levels gradually dwindled, with only a total of 169 children studying up to this stage. This being the factual data of the village indicating participation of the children in education at various levels, many of these children who had left schooling and are now either working or looking for some employment, particularly from the group of first child and may be some of the children as indicated their first child of lower age groups now must be in the schools pursuing their studies. Discussions with the children studying in the schools as well as their parents during field work, it was found that the elder girls are good at teaching the younger ones and the elder boys to some extent helped the younger siblings in their studies.

Table 13
Level of Literacy of the Children of the Households in the Village

Education Status	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4	Child 5	Child 6	Total
Illiterate	42	12	3	3	3	3	66
Primary	60	61	65	31	17	6	240
Middle	52	50	48	21	8	2	181
Secondary	58	48	16	6	1	-	129
Sr. Secondary	24	9	4	3	-	-	40
Total	236	180	136	64	29	11	656

The Atta and Barota Schools of the Village

There are two Primary Schools in the village known as (i) Atta and (ii) Barota Primary Schools located within a radius of 3 kms., the Atta School is located at the entrance of the village, very well inside the village and the Atta-Barota School is on the other end of the village, just opposite to the Atta School and also within the reach of the villagers. Access to both the schools is very good and is located at a walking distance for the children. The Atta School is not so properly maintained, having an open boundary due to a dispute between the villagers and the school, its premise is highly dusty and not well maintained and most of its rooms are closed. Only one room is practically utilized for teaching activity by two of its teachers, that is, one male and a female. The female teacher belongs to the village and the male teacher comes from a nearby village. The mid-day meal kitchen is also not in a good condition. The school ground is very dusty and there is no plantation and its maintenance is very poor. Thus this school is not very attractive and its teachers outrightly rule out that they can maintain the premises, as there is no provision of sweepers and other helping hands and also there is no security provided to the school and its infrastructural items as well. The classrooms are used as junk or store rooms for storing all broken chairs, torn mats and broken tables, benches etc. From the photographs, it will be clear that its premises are unattractive and in poor condition. The condition in which the school is organized is also very grim. The children utilize the single classroom available to them which is not very attractive and nor impressive in any way. The Barota School, on the other hand, is comparatively better in terms of its

premises, decorated with plants and a secure boundary wall. It has the high school adjacent to it. The number of teachers working in the school is higher with 6 teachers having both male and female teachers, while the Atta School has only two teachers, one male and female, and the other 2 positions of teachers are lying vacant for more than a year or so. Both the schools had dumped broken furniture in the classrooms and the maintenance of the schools is not very much adequate. The rooms needed repairs as well as maintenance.

The data relating to number of children enrolled in the two schools of Atta and Barota is presented in Table 14. The enrolment shows that there are only 323 children studying in these two schools. The Atta school had 140 children with 76 boys and 64 girls while the Barota school had 187 children, with 98 boys and 85 girls. The enrolment in class I in both the schools is 107, with 50 girls and 57 boys; the enrolment in Class II was 74 children, with 38 boys and 36 girls; and Class III had 47 children, with 23 boys and 24 girls, while Classes IV and V had enrolment of 45 and 44 children. The enrolments gradually dwindled while the children transited from the lower to the upper classes which is a very common phenomenon in the rural schools and is also found in both the schools of this village.

Table 14
Class-wise Enrolment of Children in the Atta and Barota Schools

Classes	Boys		Girls		Total	
	<i>Atta School</i>	<i>Barota School</i>	<i>Atta School</i>	<i>Barota School</i>	<i>Atta School</i>	<i>Barota School</i>
I	29	28	23	27	52	55
II	19	19	19	17	38	36
III	11	12	9	15	20	27
IV	8	18	7	12	15	30
V	9	21	6	18	15	39
Total	76	98	64	85	140	187

It will be observed that although the number of children is found to be 656, their enrolment in both of the schools is only 323 children who are all studying in the school. This is because some of the children in the household are above the school age, i.e., they are over-age and have already completed their education or being older children have

entered into employment. It will also be observed that the number of girl children is lesser than the male children in the village as such and the enrolment of the girls is accordingly lower in the schools. The village although had a high school, the pass out from the primary schools for entering the high school somehow remained very low: this indicates that the children gradually drop out while moving to higher classes, even while moving to classes IV and V gradually dropped out. The enrolment in these classes is also found to be lower, with Atta school having 30 children and Barota school having 69 children.

The schools are expected to be attractive in terms of their conditions and setting. They need proper maintenance and organization of the classes so that the children can enjoy their studies in the school. Being a rural area, the village is disadvantaged; the inadequate and improper maintenance of school will not be able to inspire the learners to attend the school as well as would not make the children feel that the schooling conditions are better and in any way different than the housing conditions where they reside. There is not any difference in their home living conditions and at the school. This also may be one of the reasons affecting the regularity of participation by the children in the schools. Although the school heads stated that they get around Rs10,000/- for maintenance of the schools, this amount is not sufficient for school maintenance. The schools did not have any charts and other attractive display like wall writings etc., in both the schools. No care is being taken to develop attractive displays and wall writings on the walls of the schools to attract the students. No doubt that the education department has provided them with television and set- top boxes in order to help the children observe various educational programmes, but the schools are struggling to pay the electricity bills as there is no provision in the schools for making payment of electricity rentals. And another major problem is that of security of the equipments of the schools. The schools do not have adequate storage space for the books and other learning material of the school and they did not have any such material for utilizing them in the classes. The classes are taught only through chalk and talk method and no other methods of activity learning or any other interesting and innovative methods are ever adopted in the classroom teaching process.

It is reported that the schools did not conduct any remedial classes by identifying weak learners and organizing competitive learning activities and evaluation to understand the performance of children. While holding discussions with the school teachers, they stated that the backwardness and economic conditions of the parents and their participation in daily wage employment are the causes of low participation among children. During agricultural seasons, majority of the children did not attend the school. The additional efforts of the school and teachers, which is required, is not found among teachers and all the blame is placed on poverty and poor conditions of the family, although there are some families who are above poverty line and are interested for good education, the teachers did not pay any additional attention for such children whereas there are some motivated children who we found to be good at their studies in the schools, due to their willingness to learn and be educated.

The teachers were reported to be attending and teaching the classes on a mere routine basis rather than teaching with dedication. The villagers, most particularly the village head, reported that he made regular visits to the school to check the regularity of the teachers and also, in the past complained to the higher authority of teacher's irregularity and teaching without any interest to the children and the teacher was transferred. But the village head, who is educated, is still not satisfied with the teachers, particularly of the Atta School and wants good teachers for improving the school discipline and teaching.



The Barota Primary School of Atta Village – The school children



The Atta Primary School of Atta Village – The Mid-day Meal Kitchen

Aspirations of Parents regarding the Future of their Children

The information relating to aspirations of parents with regard to what profession they would prefer for their children was also collected and the parents had high hopes provided their children performed well and studied sincerely (Table 15). The response collected from the parents is both for boys and girls. It will be observed that most of the parents felt that their children should become educated and take up teaching jobs, as they felt that teaching profession is the best for their children and more particularly for the girl child, and for boys they felt that they should reach higher levels of institutions such as colleges etc. As many as 42.9 per cent of the heads of the households felt that their girl child should take up the job of a teacher and serve in the nearby villages which they felt very safe and secure. While 32.5 per cent of the parents felt that boys should reach higher educational institutions as teachers, some of the parents also felt that their children should become engineers and doctors and take up good business jobs, but such parents were very few. They also questioned about the quality of education the children are receiving. They expressed further that there is no money with them for sending their children to private tuitions. Their children find it very difficult to continue their studies and as they are unable to provide any good facilities in the studies of their children, they felt that the fulfilment of their aspirations is very difficult. They also stated that the struggle they had to face daily to earn their livelihood is very hard and under such circumstances, their children cannot go beyond the school level of education. That is why they felt that the children should study at least up to that level so that they can at least become teachers in the schools.

Table 15
Career Expectations of Family members from their Children (Boys and Girls)

Career Expectations	In case of Boys (%)	In case of Girls (%)
Primary Teacher	7.7	42.9
Doctor	0.8	1.9
College/University Teacher	35.2	2.7
Engineer	2.7	0.8
Business	1.9	-
Others	51.7	51.7
Total	100.0	100.0

The girl children mostly shared and worked for household chores (Table 16). However, the parents/mothers covered in the present study though unwilling to accept but they were found to use the services of girl child in household chores. It was found that 28% of the households made the girls to assist them in cooking, 7.7% asked the girls for fetching water from bore wells, 29.5% associated them for washing utensils and 3.8% families entrusted the girls the responsibility to look after animals.

Table 16
Help rendered by Girls at Home after coming from School

	Type of help (Response from Heads of Households)				
	<i>Looking after (Sibling care) %</i>	<i>Cooking %</i>	<i>Bring water from the well/boring well/tap %</i>	<i>Washing Utensils %</i>	<i>Feeding Animals %</i>
Yes	37.9	28.0	7.7	29.5	3.8
No	10.4	20.3	40.6	18.8	44.4
Others	51.7	51.7	51.7	51.7	51.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Similarly, 25.3% of the girls helped their mothers after returning from school, 4.2% of the girls assisted their mothers in tailoring and such kind of petty jobs of stitching work (Table N0.17). 23.0% of the girl children helped their mothers in washing clothes of the household. Thus, it will be observed that the girl children had to do many of the household chores, and in fact these domestic activities became the part of their daily routine and the girl child had to perform all these duties in addition to attending the school. This additional burden of work and also attending the school has adversely affected their performance in the school and sometimes they remained absent from the school as they could not complete the assignments given to them; and irregularity to attend the schools also affected their studies and, as such, they could not cope with the lessons which were being taught in the schools and as a result they failed in their tests.

Table 17
Help rendered by Girls at Home after coming from school (contd.)

	Type of help (Response from Girls)			
	<i>Helping Mother (%)</i>	<i>Tailoring (%)</i>	<i>Washing Cloth (%)</i>	<i>Any other (%)</i>
Yes	25.3	4.2	23.0	3.1
No	23.0	44.1	25.3	45.2
Others	47.7	47.7	47.7	47.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

In addition to household chores, which the girls invariably perform, some of the girls also support the school teachers and provide their services, even though the teachers denied this fact (Table 18). It was found that 9.6% of the girls cleaned/swept the classroom in which they were studying, 27.4% of girls also brought drinking water for the teachers which may be out of respect or otherwise. This is done invariably by the girls only. 26.2% of the girls also cleaned the desks of teachers while 10.1% of the girl children also stated that they assisted the teachers in spreading the mats in the classrooms. Thus, the girl child also contributed in some of the activities of schools, maybe it is due to their motive of having a clean classroom or making the classroom look good. These activities are never performed by the boys in the schools.

Table 18
Type of help the Girls render in School/Class

	Type of help (Response of Heads of Households)			
	<i>Sweeping the class/school</i>	<i>Bring water for the teacher</i>	<i>Cleaning the desk of teacher</i>	<i>Putting the mats in the classroom</i>
	%	%	%	%
Yes	9.6	27.4	26.2	10.1
No	38.7	19.9	21.1	37.2
Others	51.7	51.7	51.7	51.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Monthly Allowance paid to Children in the Schools

The education department, government of Haryana has made provision of scholarship in terms of money to be paid to the children belonging to the Scheduled Castes (Table 19). This provision has been made by the government keeping in view

poverty of these families as well as utilization of the girl child in household activities instead of sending them to the schools. The scholarship money, in a way, also helped the parents in adding to their earnings, to some extent, and acted as an incentive for sending their girl children regularly to the school. However, as of today, the scholarship eligibility can be attained only if the girl child is present in the school for 75% of the working days. This scholarship money has two components, i.e., the first component of a fixed amount of allowance is paid once in a year ranging between Rs.740/- to Rs.1450/- with a gradual increase in the allowance amount as the child goes from the lower to the higher classes, the second component of incentive is paid on a monthly basis.

The scholarship amount is deposited directly in the bank account of a Scheduled Caste girl child which is opened at the time of admission by the school in a nearby bank and around the months of August and September when the scholarship money is cleared by the Social Welfare Department after obtaining the list of the children admitted in various schools of the district. A child of Class I gets an amount of Rs.740, and Rs.750 is paid to the Class II child; Rs.960 is paid to the Class III child, and an increase of Rs.10 per class up to the level of Class V is paid to the Scheduled Caste children. This allowance amount is further increased to Rs.1250 for Classes VI to VIII and Rs.1450 each is paid to the students of Classes IX, X, XI and XII.

The second component of incentives is in the form of scholarship to the Scheduled Caste children and this amount also gradually increases as the child moves upward from the primary to the higher classes and this amount of scholarship is higher for the Scheduled Caste girl child compared to that for the boys. The scholarship is paid to the students through their bank account every month. The scholarship money varies and increases from lower to higher classes. The amount of monthly scholarship paid to the girls is higher than that paid to the boys, which probably is meant for encouraging regular as well as continuous participation of a girl child in the school. The scholarship amount of Rs.300 is paid to boys and Rs.400 is paid to the girls studying in the Class I level, and this amount increases continuously from Class II till Class V amounting to Rs.450 for girls and this is further increased to Rs.600 for girls studying up to Classes VII and thereafter to Rs.900 – Rs.1200 from Classes IX till Classes XII and the girl students

opting for sciences subject get more scholarship compared to that for the arts students. While the scholarship amount increases very minimally for boys with Rs.450 up to class VIII and Rs.600 up to XII class and with Rs.900 for sciences stream boys which is little higher than that paid to the arts stream. Thus, the children belonging to the Scheduled Castes are paid scholarships to support their studies. The amount of scholarship paid to the girl students is kept higher, this is perhaps due to the fact that the drop-out at the higher levels of schooling is higher for the girls and as the number of girls entering secondary schools gradually decreases, the government of Haryana has taken these factors into consideration and put in place the payment of scholarships from the primary levels of schooling up to senior secondary levels especially to the children of the Scheduled Castes.

Table 19
Monthly Allowance paid to the Scheduled Caste Students

Classes	Gender	Monthly Allowance	One Time Allowance
I	Boys	Rs.300	Rs.740
	Girls	Rs.400	Rs.740
II	Boys	Rs.300	Rs.750
	Girls	Rs.450	Rs.750
III	Boys	Rs.300	Rs.960
	Girls	Rs.450	Rs.960
IV	Boys	Rs.300	Rs.970
	Girls	Rs.450	Rs.970
V	Boys	Rs.300	Rs.980
	Girls	Rs.450	Rs.980
VI	Boys	Rs.450	Rs.1250
	Girls	Rs.600	Rs.1250
VII	Boys	Rs.450	Rs.1250
	Girls	Rs.600	Rs.1250
VIII	Boys	Rs.450	Rs.1250
	Girls	Rs.600	Rs.1250
IX	Boys	Rs.600	Rs.1450
	Girls	Rs.900	Rs.1450
X	Boys	Rs.600	Rs.1450
	Girls	Rs.900	Rs.1450
XI	Boys	Rs.600(Arts)Rs.900 (Science)	Rs.1450
	Girls	Rs.900(Arts)Rs.1200 (Science)	Rs.1450
XII	Boys	Rs.600(Arts)Rs.900 (Science)	Rs.1450
	Girls	Rs.900(Arts)Rs.1200 (Science)	Rs.1450

Source: District Education Office, Mewat (31.7.08).

Opinion of Mothers

The parents, especially the mothers are interviewed with regard to their meeting with the teachers in order to understand the problems of their children and their performance in the schools. This response from the families is very much essential in order to understand the levels of interest and awareness these families had towards education and also their proximity to the schools and the teachers. Interestingly, it is observed that 40% of the parents never visited the school and not met the teacher to discuss the problem of studies of their children. 35% of the parents stated that they visited 3-5 times in a year and met the teachers and discussed various problems that their children faced while in school. 25% of the parents stated that they visited the school one to two times and met the teachers and discussed various problems of their children with them. The parents, mostly found to be occupied in employment and activities related to managing the households, were reported to have stated that in order to go to the school, they have to forego their employment for the day which is not possible for them to afford.

Concluding Observations

Since Independence the development of the Scheduled Caste has remained a great concern for the nation, although the Constitution has made provisions to safeguard these groups from exclusion and welfare measures were taken care to a great extent. However, the pace of development among these disadvantaged groups met with roadblocks. Ramachandran Vimla (2004) has pointed out that the situation in Haryana is perhaps the starkest, where the villages never have equal ratio of Scheduled Caste to forward caste population; more than 90 per cent children in the government school are from the Scheduled Caste communities while majority of the private school-going children are from forward castes including the other backward castes.

Compounded to the problem of low levels of education among these groups, it will also be observed that incidence of poverty among Scheduled Castes has remained at 64.6%, Of the total Scheduled Caste population, 85% live in rural area, 49% rural Scheduled Caste population are agricultural labourers (Mackwana, M, 2003). Similar was the instance of Atta-Barota village where the present study was organized. Majority of

the inhabitants are employed as labourers (79.0%) during the agricultural seasons and they worked as waged labourers during non-agricultural seasons and sometimes remained unemployed. Majority of the women are illiterate (62.5%) and also worked as agricultural labourers and this has affected education of the children and more particularly of the girl child in the village.

The findings of the study are not different from what has been studied earlier like Mackwana (2003), Manorama (2000) and others. The sample village population of Atta-Barota, where the study was organized, were found to be poor landless agriculture labourers (50.6%) who depended on daily wages for employment during the agriculture seasons and struggled hard for their livelihood in off agriculture period and a majority (33.7%) have stated to be earning and spending on food etc below Rs.2.000/- per month. It is observed that mere provision of housing facilities, which most of the Scheduled Caste inhabitants in the village possessed (96.6%), this did not give them any reprieve from secured employment (as 50.6% were agriculture dependent and 28.7% were daily wage laborers) and food security which is the most important livelihood requirement. Schools are there (two schools) but the teachers could not stop these children from helping their parents during agricultural seasons where the children helped their parents in many ways.

Like any other rural inhabitant, the Scheduled Caste inhabitants of Atta village have been struggling to survive as the provisions made by the government for their welfare never reached them, for example, whether it is employment, health, food and development of their village where they reside, making their livelihood is highly dependent on a number of factors beyond them. In fact, these disadvantages in the village have directly hindered their capabilities, rendering them to only low category waged-labour force with low earning capacity (hand to mouth earning) and a poverty stricken human resource has evolved. It is very apt referring to Sen (1999): the capabilities among the human beings, unless such capabilities are adequately addressed - deprivations faced by these groups are overcome – development cannot take place in the country. Looking at the quantum of the rural mass as who are backbone for the economic development of the country and constitute 49% of Scheduled Castes have been left with very limited

development options, the question of educating the children by these disadvantaged parents in poorly managed rural schools is like providing low quality schooling which again is another disadvantage in securing employment due to low levels of educational attainments.

The unending miseries the Scheduled Castes face makes them focus their attention to only obtaining a daily wage employment and earning so that the family can survive, their aspirations also restrict to these basic needs and obviously their aspirations are limited. The development which is taking place in the country is bi-directional, i.e., just like forces pulling and pushing in the opposite directions with the urban population moving forward and the rural masses being furiously pushed backwards resulting in generating inequalities leading to rural-urban tensions in the country. The inhabitants of the village remained in the same village as they were provided with housing and as such adhered to whatever employment was available to them in the village and the vicinity. There is not much of migration taking place among the villagers which perhaps might have increased their dependency on the primary occupations of agriculture and waged labour and perhaps a cause of poverty and replication of backwardness among these households in the Atta-Barota village.

The individual case studies of girl children showed their aspirations for some good occupations once they completed their education. But they were apprehensive whether they will be able to study up to those levels to secure a good job like a teacher, a doctor and a police woman. While, some of the children see the rich in the village and their life styles, they understand it very well that it is futile on their part to aspire for such possessions of the rich people and develop a tendency of confining themselves to their community and neighborhood alone with whatever little they have. The responses to help rendered by the girl child at home also indicates that the girls served at home and not the boys, the services of the girls which have no returns in terms of money ranged from taking care of siblings (37.9%), helping in cooking or cooking ((28.0%), washing utensils (29.5%), even washing of clothes was also done (23.0%) and majority of the girl children assisted their mothers in household chores (25.3%). Even in the schools, although the teaches denied that children are not allowed to clean the classrooms etc, 27.4% of the girl

children fetched drinking water to the teacher and 26.2% girl children cleaned desks of the teachers and sometimes also helped in spreading the seating mats in the classrooms and cleaned the class rooms. These activities which are performed by the girl child are never reported either by the school or by the households, though the girl child is found to perform these duties at home and also most often in the schools as well. These activities manifest among the girls in general whether it is rural or urban households, as the social customs of the Indian family expect the girl child to be more dutiful, devoted and workalcoholic for the household activities which are latent social norms.

In case of Atta village, the girl child who belonged to the poor households had to perform much more than the urban counterpart, as there is no other way out for the girls like her and as the role model, i.e., their illiterate mother suffers working day in and out at home as well as in the fields they also make themselves fit into the design of their mother and the elderly women of the village, leading to copying or replication of the activities of their mother and the rural women in their vicinity. At times, the mothers also discriminate against the girl child with their sons and are treated her lowly compared to sons. The aspirations for selecting occupations for the boy and the girl child also varied, they preferred that the boys to become doctors, engineers and enter into other good occupations while for the girls they preferred job of a primary school teacher. The reason for choosing a teaching job in schools for the girls is due to its security and also they felt (42.9%) that the girl child can only study up to the levels of obtaining a teaching job. These societal norms and customary ethos seem to be deeply imbibed by the girl children from their childhood and they very well understand that to compete with their brothers will be futile at home and it is but natural to succumb to the needs of the household responsibilities and spend most of their labour and time in household activities, and even if they are studying in the schools and find it difficult to cope up with their studies resulting in irregularity and dropping out of the schools.

It is also observed that the teachers who are mostly from other castes also either deliberately or out of their sheer habits had a tendency to give less importance to the children who belonged to low socio-economic status with their poor dressing patterns and hygiene conditions. From the discussions with the teachers it is found that they rarely

visited the houses of the children and more particularly girl children who are not regular to the schools in order to bring them to the schools and educate them, while the illiterate mothers are not confident to face the educated teachers and avoided meeting them. The low levels of education among the parents in case of Atta-Barota village with 62.5% illiterate women and mothers with 24.5% of men (fathers) are illiterate and the dependency of the heads of the households on daily wage earning (79.0%) has also affected education among the children and more particularly the education of the girl child. Some of these factors may also be the cause of social replications taking place among these inhabitants of this village of Atta-Barota which is affecting the education of the girl child.

For the girl children it becomes very difficult to attend the school as very often they are required to attend to household work if both the parents participate in waged labour and this leads to irregularity in attending the classes. Their irregularity, inability to learn subjects taught, home work and other assignments make them weak learners and put them into isolation from the rest of the regularly attending students and this ultimately forces the girl children to dropout. That's why it sometimes gives a feeling that whether our education which we provide to the Scheduled Caste children is a mere creation of social replication of the same categories or why we are not in a position to move ahead out of this illusion of welfare to these category of people who have tended to remain backward over ages. These issues should be adequately addressed, otherwise this might become a cause of exclusion among Scheduled Castes from the main stream of development. Mere reservation policies may not be able to improve their living and economic conditions but there needs to be a transparent system of uplifting these categories with effective educational and other related programmes so that it will facilitate better participation of the Scheduled Castes more specially the girl children in education.

It may also be observed from the study that the villagers did not receive any ration from the Public Distribution System and the Health Centre remains closed most of the time without any medical facilities which is an indication of inadequate governmental services that put the villagers into hardships. On the other hand, due to inflation and high

price of food items etc, either the cheapest available food items or no other items are consumed by them affecting health conditions. The lack of medicines in the Primary Health Care Centre is another problem, as they spend money on private local doctors and are not in a position to go to professional doctors and buy costly medicines which results in ill health conditions, which in turn affects irregular participation in waged labour, such conditions of struggle and deprivation are also found to be leading to miseries and indebtedness among these rural disadvantaged villagers. In such circumstances, the poor rural villagers and more particularly the Scheduled Caste communities, who are already landless and backward, are further pushed to high degrees of backwardness.

Table 20
Cumulative Effect of Being Scheduled Castes and Backward

Backwardness (Rural Area)	Poor Quality Facilities	Poor Out-put OR Low Quality	Cumulative Effect
Deprived of Basic facilities	School PDS PHC Electricity supply No employment opportunities Low economy	Poor quality learners Poor quality ration items Poor quality medicines Poor quality infrastructure Villages in darkness Unemployed villagers No income	Drop-out Low food intake Health problems Poor living conditions. Live in darkness Indebtedness & Fatalistic attitude Poor to poorer condition OR Social Replication

Thus, it is very essential to develop the rural areas of the country, where mostly the poor facilities cripple the development of the villages as well as education. The concept of Providing Urban like Amenities in Rural Areas (PURA) was conceived long back for the development of rural masses; the programmes under PURA could enter into majority of rural areas, with the efforts that are being made by the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India.

Keeping in view the importance of education among the rural masses, schools have been created in each and every habitation of the country, but whether the school which has been established will be able to improve the education of the villagers and, more particularly, of the Scheduled Castes is a crucial issue which needs a re-look. Due to backwardness, it is difficult to post adequate and dedicated teachers, as well as the

schooling conditions which is very bad with no basic facilities – learning material, furniture, play material, play ground, hygienic kitchen, well maintained classrooms, secured stores, so on and so forth. It will be observed from the photographs that the schools are devoid of such favourable and conducive environment for conducting proper schooling which can attract and retain the students in the schools. A rural area holistic school development policy with emphasis on good provisions needs to be developed. This programme should not only be specific to the schooling of children but also include programmes for the adults (adult education) and most particularly the women, these programmes can impact the schooling of the children as well as a variety of knowledge of empowerment, health education, services provided by the various agencies and many other informative messages can be spread among the rural people to stimulate awareness leading to their participation in the development of their villages. Such multipronged as well as coordinated programmes can make the schooling very effective and also serve the purpose of educating the children and more particularly will be able to retain the girl children belonging to the Scheduled Castes from the backward rural areas with low socio-economic conditions to a great extent and put an end to the phenomenon of social reproduction of such categories.

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