

**ESSAYS ON CASTE DISCRIMINATION IN SCHOOL  
EDUCATION IN RURAL INDIA**

**NEHA**



**DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL  
SCIENCES**

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# **Essays on Caste Discrimination in School Education in Rural India**

*by*

**Neha**

**Department of Humanities and Social Sciences**

*submitted*

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*to the*



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# Dedication

*To my loving grandmothers, Surji Bailwal & Sarla Shah*

# Certificate

This is to certify that the thesis titled "**Essays on Caste Discrimination in School Education in Rural India**", submitted by **Ms. Neha** to the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi for the award of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy**, is a bona-fide record of research work done by her under my supervision. The results contained in the thesis have not been submitted, in full or in part, to any other institute or university for the award of any degree or diploma.

Dr. Sourabh Bikas Paul  
Assistant Professor  
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences  
Indian Institute of Technology Delhi  
New Delhi- 110016, India

Date:

Place : New Delhi

# Preface

Chapter 2 of this thesis, "Caste discrimination in provision of public schools in rural India", is published in *The Journal of Development Studies*. It is joint work with Dr. Sourabh Paul. I was actively engaged in all stages of the work, including extracting and analysing data, interpreting and presenting results, writing and revising the manuscript.

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# Abstract

In this thesis, we have three empirical essays investigating issues about caste discrimination and school education in rural India. Each chapter of the thesis attempts to understand why despite the best attempts and promising policy reforms like “*Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan*” and Right to Education Act 2009, there is a persistence gap in educational outcomes between “Scheduled Castes” (SCs), “Scheduled Tribes” (STs), and the general population.

In the first essay, we look into the extent of caste discrimination in the provision of public schools in Indian villages and its effect on educational disparities between social groups. Using Census data, we find that there is a systematic bias against socially and economically backward castes in the provision of public schools, and this systematic bias in the provision of public schools explains the gaps in educational outcomes across castes.

In the second essay, we study the role of the population composition of a village in determining the quality of school facilities in rural India. In particular, we seek to examine if there is any systematic bias in the quality of public schools in a village due to the caste composition of the village and does this systematic bias in quality explain gaps in educational outcomes across castes. Using Census and District Information System for Education (DISE) data, we find that villages inhabited by the higher share of socially backward groups have lower-quality public schools as compared to villages inhabited by higher castes. This caste-based difference in the quality of public schools is associated with the gaps in drop-out rates and total enrolments.

In the last essay, we investigate the role of the dominant caste in a village to explain the gaps in educational outcomes across social groups. Using the Indian Human Development Survey (IHDS 2011), we find that village dominance significantly affects the learning outcome of the marginalised castes in rural India. SC children residing in villages dominated by upper-caste are less likely to obtain a higher score on reading and arithmetic skills as compared to a characteristically similar individual living in a village dominated by their same caste. We also find that teacher differential treatment towards the SC children is an important channel through which village dominance manifests in learning gaps.

# सार

प्रस्तुत शोध प्रबंध में ग्रामीण भारत में जातिगत भेदभाव एवं स्कूली शिक्षा के विभिन्न मुद्दों व समस्याओं की विवेचना करने वाले तीन निबंध हैं। शोध प्रबंध के प्रत्येक अध्याय द्वारा यह समझने का प्रयास किया गया है कि “सर्व शिक्षा अभियान” एवं Right to Education Act 2009 जैसे सराहनीय प्रयासों तथा आशा जनक नीतिगत सुधारों के बावजूद अनुसूचित जातियों, अनुसूचित जनजातियों तथा सामान्य लोगों के मध्य शिक्षागत परिणामों में सतत अंतर क्यों है।

शोध प्रबंध के प्रथम निबंध में यह देखा गया है कि भारतीय गांवों में निजी स्कूलों के प्रावधान में जातिगत भेदभाव एवं सामाजिक समूहों के मध्य शैक्षिक असमानता किस प्रकार प्रभावित होती है। Census के आंकड़ों का अध्ययन करने पर हम यह देखते हैं कि निजी स्कूलों में सामाजिक एवं आर्थिक रूप से पिछड़ी जातियों के विरुद्ध एक सुव्यवस्थित भेदभाव है, जो शैक्षिक परिणामों के अंतर की व्याख्या करता है।

द्वितीय निबंध के अंतर्गत ग्रामीण भारत में स्कूली सुविधाओं की गुणवत्ता को निर्धारित करने में जनसंख्या संरचना की भूमिका का अध्ययन किया गया है। इस अध्ययन के अंतर्गत यह जांचने का प्रयास किया गया है कि क्या गांव की जातिगत संरचना के कारण निजी स्कूलों की गुणवत्ता में कोई व्यवस्थित पूर्वाग्रह विद्यमान है। इस पूर्वाग्रह के कारण सभी जातियों में शैक्षिक परिणामों के अंतराल की भी व्याख्या की गई है। Census और District Information System for Education (DISE) के आंकड़ों का उपयोग करने पर हम यह देखते हैं कि सामाजिक रूप से पिछड़े समूहों वाले गांवों में स्थित निजी स्कूलों की गुणवत्ता उच्च जाति वाले गांव की तुलना में काफी कम है। निजी स्कूलों का यह जातिगत भेदभाव पढ़ाई बीच में छोड़ने तथा कुल नामांकन में अंतर का मूल कारण है।

शोध प्रबंध के तीसरे तथा अंतिम निबंध में सामाजिक समूहों के मध्य शैक्षिक परिणामों में अंतराल का विश्लेषण करने के लिए एक गांव में प्रभुता वाली जाति की भूमिका की जांच करते Indian Human Development Survey (IHDS 2011) का उपयोग करने पर हमें देखते हैं कि ग्रामीण भारत में यह प्रभुत्व हाशिए पर रहने वाली जातियों के सीखने के परिणाम को काफी प्रभावित करता है। उच्च जाति के वर्चस्व वाले गांव में रहने वाले अनुसूचित जाति के बच्चों के सीखने की दक्षता तथा अंकगणितीय कौशल में उच्च अंक प्राप्त करने की संभावना उन बच्चों की तुलना में कम होती है, जो समान जाति के वर्चस्व वाले गांवों में रहते हैं। इस अध्ययन के अंतर्गत हम यह भी देखते हैं कि शिक्षकों का अनुसूचित जाति वाले बच्चों के प्रति विभेदक व्यवहार शैक्षिक अधिगम के अंतराल का प्रमुख कारण है।

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