

## EDUCATIONAL INEQUALITY: AN AMBEDKARITE PERSPECTIVE

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### ABSTRACT

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*Educational inequality remains one of the most persistent challenges in Indian society, particularly affecting marginalized and rural communities. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar emphasized education as a powerful tool for social transformation, equality, and empowerment. This paper examines the nature and persistence of educational inequality in India from an Ambedkarite perspective. Based on secondary data and existing literature, the study highlights disparities in access to educational resources, infrastructure, and opportunities between different social groups, especially in regions like North Karnataka. Rural students and students from marginalized communities continue to face structural barriers such as poverty, lack of institutional support, and limited awareness. The paper argues that educational inequality is deeply rooted in socio-economic and structural conditions, which continue to reproduce inequality despite constitutional guarantees. From an Ambedkarite perspective, such inequality represents a failure to realize the ideals of equality and social justice. The study concludes that ensuring equal access to quality education is essential for achieving social transformation and building an inclusive society.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Educational Inequality, Social Justice, Marginalization, Equality, Ambedkar.*

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## 1. Introduction

Educational inequality continues to be a major concern in Indian society, particularly affecting marginalized and rural populations. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar strongly advocated education as the foundation for achieving equality, dignity, and social justice. He believed that education is the most powerful means through which individuals can overcome oppression and improve their social status. Despite significant progress in the education sector, inequalities persist in access to quality education, infrastructure, and opportunities. Students from rural areas and disadvantaged communities often face multiple barriers, including poverty, lack of institutional support, and social discrimination. In regions such as North Karnataka, especially Kalyana Karnataka, these inequalities are more visible due to historical socio-economic backwardness. While some progress has been made through government initiatives, disparities continue to exist between different social groups. From an Ambedkarite perspective, educational inequality is not merely an issue of access but a question of justice and equality. This paper attempts to analyse the persistence of educational inequality and its implications for social justice.

## 2. Review of Literature

Various studies have highlighted the persistence of educational inequality in India. Research indicates that disparities exist in access to educational institutions, infrastructure, and learning outcomes between rural and urban areas. Studies conducted in Karnataka reveal that rural schools often lack basic facilities such as adequate classrooms, teaching staff, and learning resources. Additionally, students from marginalized communities face social and economic barriers that affect their educational participation. Research by Sampath Kumar and Shiva Kumar highlights differences in access to educational resources between rural and urban students. Similarly, studies conducted in districts like Vijayapura indicate that students face challenges in accessing quality education due to lack of awareness and institutional support. Government reports also emphasize the need to improve educational access and quality, particularly for disadvantaged groups. However, gaps in implementation continue to limit the effectiveness of these initiatives.

### **3. Methodology**

The present study is based on secondary data, including government reports, research articles, and academic literature. A qualitative and analytical approach is adopted to examine the nature and causes of educational inequality.

### **4. Discussion**

#### **4.1 Nature of Educational Inequality**

Educational inequality refers to unequal access to educational opportunities, resources, and outcomes among different sections of society. It includes disparities in:

- Access to schools and institutions
- Quality of education
- Availability of trained teachers
- Learning outcomes

#### **4.2 Rural and Social Disparities**

**Students in rural areas face multiple challenges:**

- Lack of infrastructure in schools
- Shortage of qualified teachers
- Poor institutional support
- Economic constraints

Students from marginalized communities are further disadvantaged due to social discrimination and lack of awareness.

#### **4.3 Structural Causes of Inequality**

**Educational inequality is deeply rooted in:**

- Socio-economic inequality
- Historical disadvantage
- Unequal distribution of resources
- Weak implementation of policies

These factors continue to reproduce inequality across generations.

#### **4.4 Ambedkarite Perspective**

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar viewed education as a means of empowerment and social change. He believed that access to

education is essential for achieving equality and dignity. From an Ambedkarite perspective, educational inequality represents a form of social injustice. When certain groups are denied equal opportunities, it limits their ability to participate in society and improve their conditions. Ambedkar emphasized that the state must take responsibility to ensure equal educational opportunities for all.

**Education as Social Liberation** Dr. B. R. Ambedkar viewed education as a means of social liberation and empowerment. He argued that education enables individuals to challenge oppression and improve their socio-economic conditions. According to him, without education, marginalized communities would remain excluded from opportunities and social mobility. In the present context, educational inequality limits the ability of disadvantaged groups to progress, thereby continuing structures of inequality.

**Equality vs Social Reality** Ambedkar emphasized that political equality must be accompanied by social and economic equality. While the Constitution guarantees equal rights, inequalities in access to education reveal a gap between constitutional ideals and social reality. Educational inequality reflects this contradiction, where formal equality exists but is not fully realized in practice.

**State Responsibility in Education** Ambedkar strongly believed that the state has a responsibility to provide equal educational opportunities to all citizens. He argued that without state intervention, historically disadvantaged communities would continue to remain backward. In this context, the persistence of inequality indicates the need for stronger policy implementation and institutional support.

**Education and Social Justice** For Ambedkar, education was not merely about acquiring knowledge but about achieving dignity, equality, and justice. Unequal access to education undermines these principles and restricts the participation of marginalized groups in social and economic life.

#### **4.5 Constitutional Provisions on Education**

The Constitution of India reflects the commitment to equality and education:

- Article 14 – Equality before law
- Article 15 – Prohibition of discrimination

- Article 21A – Right to education
- Article 46 – Promotion of educational interests of weaker sections

Despite these provisions, inequalities persist, indicating a gap between constitutional ideals and social reality.

#### **4.6 Government Initiatives and Challenges**

Various government programmes aim to improve educational access and quality. These include efforts to increase enrollment, improve infrastructure, and support disadvantaged groups. However, challenges remain:

- Inadequate implementation
- Lack of monitoring
- Institutional weaknesses

#### **5. Conclusion**

Educational inequality remains a significant challenge in achieving social justice in India. Despite constitutional provisions and policy efforts, disparities continue to exist, particularly affecting rural and marginalized communities. From an Ambedkarite perspective, this inequality represents a failure to realize the ideals of equality and justice. Ensuring equal access to quality education is essential for empowering individuals and promoting social transformation. Addressing educational inequality requires structural changes, effective policy implementation, and a strong commitment to the principles of social justice.

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