

Resource allocation in education schemes for marginalized communities: A comparative analysis based on centrally sponsored schemes

Indhu T R

Research Scholar, Gulati Institute of Finance and Taxation, Thiruvananthapuram

Abstract

The Scheduled Castes (SCs) are among the most socially and educationally disadvantaged groups in India. Scheduled Castes have different histories of social and economic deprivation, and the underlying causes of their educational marginalisation are also strikingly distinct. However, comparing educational outcomes among Scheduled Castes yields a common picture the government has sought to address through a common set of policy prescriptions. This paper examines, how the allocation from the Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) for scheduled caste communities, particularly for pre-matric and post-matric scholarships, helps in reducing dropout rates and increasing the Gross Enrolment Ratio. How far does this scheme help the marginalised communities to develop their education and thereby increase their standard of living?

Keywords: Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS), Public expenditure, Gross Enrolment Ratio, Post matric fellowship, Pre matric fellowship.

1. Introduction

The Scheduled Caste community in India has faced longstanding challenges stemming from social discrimination, lack of access to education, and economic deprivation, all of which have contributed to their lagging behind in various aspects of development. Recognising the need to address these disparities and elevate the status of these marginalised groups within

society, independent India adopted a comprehensive approach. This approach involved two main strategies: first, providing constitutional and legal safeguards to protect their interests and prevent exploitation, and second, integrating specific components targeting their developmental needs into the country's Five-Year Plans. The central and state governments have taken several initiatives to develop scheduled castes. From 2017-18 onwards, D/o Social Justice and Empowerment have been entrusted with monitoring the physical and financial outcome of schemes under the Development Action Plan for scheduled castes (DAPSC). The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is the central authority responsible for supervising the progress and empowerment initiatives targeted towards the scheduled castes. While the main duties lie with different central ministries and state governments/union territory Administrations, the Ministry of SJ&E has been designated as the primary coordinating body for this purpose (SJ&E 2021-22). It supports these efforts through interventions such as scholarships, hostels, concessional loans, and more. The principal aim of implementing the post-matric scheme is to increase the gross enrolment ratio and mitigate dropout rates among scheduled castes, which aligns with the main objective of the pre-matric scheme. This paper primarily examines two centrally sponsored educational schemes: post-matric and pre-matric Scholarships and analyses the effect on dropout ratio and GER.

Terms

- Gross Enrolment Ratio or GER, at the higher education level, is the ratio of people enrolled in higher education to the population in the age group of 18-23.
- Dropout rates refer to the percentage of students who leave an educational institution or program before completing it.

Significance of the study

This paper examines some of the centrally sponsored education schemes for the development of scheduled caste communities. Education is a pivotal tool for social empowerment, laying the foundation for all developmental aspirations. Ensuring access to quality education is crucial in empowering individuals, enhancing their employment opportunities, and alleviating issues of marginalization and deprivation in the job market. The government prioritizes education to uplift the Scheduled Caste community, allocating significant resources towards this venture. These initiatives encompass various education schemes, including improvements in pre-matric and post-matric studies, establishment of Model Residential

Schools, and provision of assistance to students enrolled in self-financing colleges etc. Education has been a key focus of programs aimed at improving the status of Scheduled Castes. These programs have included laws against untouchability and caste-based discrimination, as well as reservation of seats in educational institutions and employment opportunities.

Objective of the study

How the allocation from the Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) for scheduled caste communities, particularly for pre-matric and post-matric scholarships, help in reducing dropout rates and increasing the Gross Enrolment Ratio?

Methodology of the study

This study is descriptive as it describes the characteristics of a particular group with a narration of facts concerning them. This study has been carried out with the help of secondary data. Secondary data were collected from the statistical and Annual reports of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, SCDD, UDISE + and AISHE. Data were collected from the period of 2017-2022. Descriptive analysis is used to analyse the data.

Literature review

Education is seen as a way to empower Scheduled Castes and enable them to succeed in a society where their status is determined by merit rather than social background. (Suma Chitnis 1972) The main factors that contribute to the educational backwardness of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are poverty, lack of access to quality education, and social discrimination. These communities are often marginalised and excluded from mainstream society, which makes it difficult for them to succeed in school. Despite these challenges, there have been some efforts to improve the educational attainment of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. These efforts include providing scholarships, building schools in remote areas, and training teachers to be more sensitive to the needs of these students. While these efforts have had some success, there is still much work to be done. The educational backwardness of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes is a complex problem, and there is no easy solution. However, by continuing to research the issue and implement effective programs, we can make progress towards ensuring that all children have the opportunity to

succeed in school.1998, Joseph Kacharayil) The provision of hostel and scholarship facilities has led to a notable increase in the enrolment of scheduled caste students in schools and colleges. Given the acute poverty faced by these scheduled caste groups, such support systems play a crucial role in encouraging and motivating them to pursue their education. These facilities help alleviate financial burdens and provide the necessary encouragement for scheduled caste students to continue their educational journey. (Sharma K.L. 1974) Students encounter challenges in obtaining scholarships for college education. In some cases, even if they are awarded scholarships, the disbursement may be delayed, leaving them to bear the financial burden for up to six months after admission. Due to these limitations and financial constraints, many parents are unable to send their children to higher education. This predicament is particularly acute for the Harijan community, making it a significant and genuine concern for them. (Singh, R.G.1986). Scholarships are provided to all scheduled caste students throughout their education, serving as a motivating factor and creating opportunities for them. A majority of scheduled caste students complete their education with the assistance of government facilities. Therefore, these government provisions play a vital role in facilitating the education of scheduled caste students. (Parvatamma, Satyanarayan 1984).

Data analysis and interpretation

This paper discusses Some of the centrally sponsored schemes of scheduled caste communities for their educational development during 2017 -22 and to find whether this scheme fulfilled its objective during this period. The Two important Centrally sponsored schemes are discussed below;

1. Pre-matric scholarships to the students belonging to scheduled castes

Background

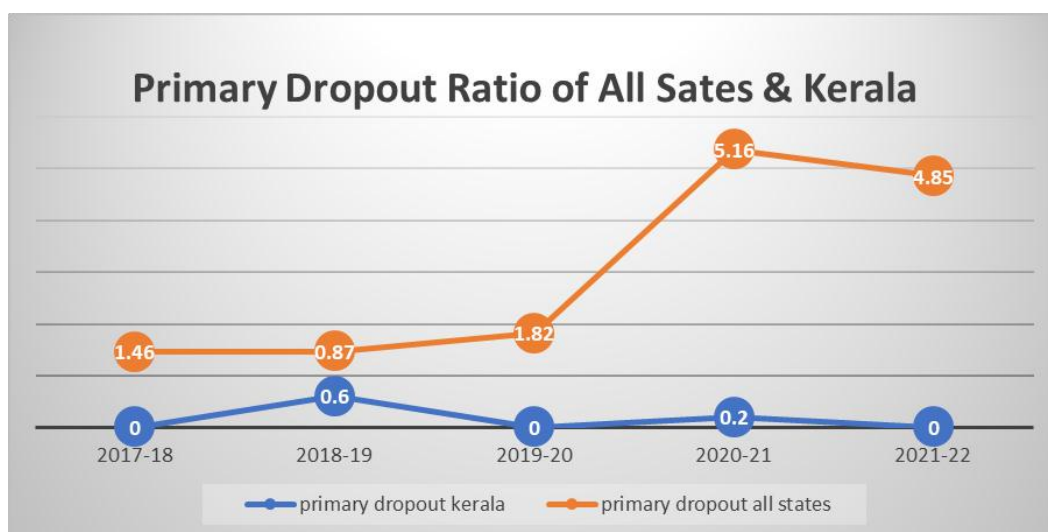
The Government of India has implemented two Centrally Sponsored Schemes aimed at fostering literacy and ensuring uninterrupted education for specific groups of children. These include the Pre-Matric Scholarship Scheme for SC Students and the Pre-Matric Scholarship

Scheme for children of parents or guardians involved in unclean and hazardous occupations. These schemes have been operational since July 1, 2012, and April 1, 1977, respectively. Day scholars were later incorporated into the scheme in 1991. Financial aid is extended under these schemes to support pre-matric education for children belonging to targeted groups, including scavengers of dry latrines, tanners, and flayers.

Objectives

The objective of the scheme is to offer financial aid to parents belonging to Scheduled Castes and other marginalized groups to support their children's education at the pre-matric stage. The aim is to boost their engagement, reduce dropout rates during transitions from primary to higher levels, enhance academic achievements, and elevate their prospects of advancing to post-matric education levels. The following figures show the primary dropout, upper primary dropout and secondary dropout of all states and Kerala from 2017-2022.

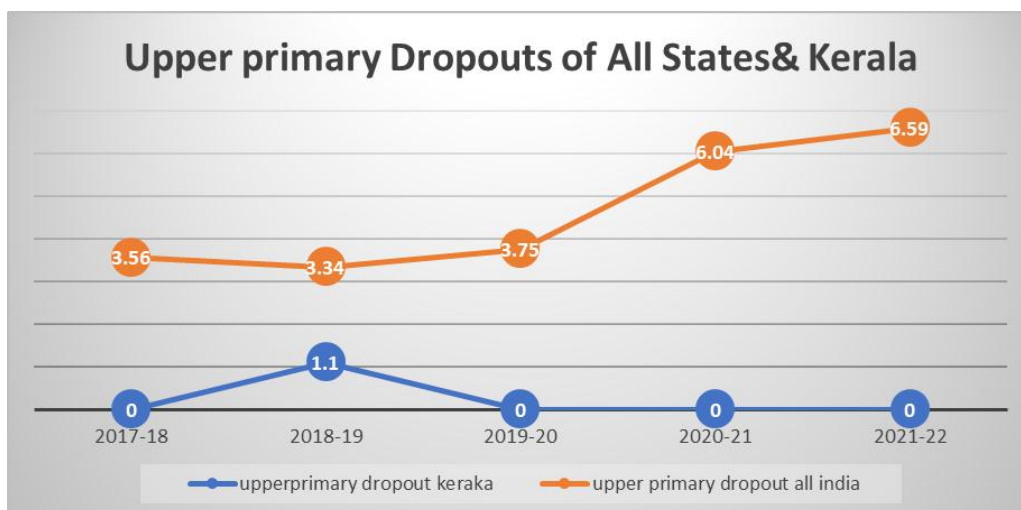
Figure I - Primary dropout ratio of all states and Kerala from 2017-2022



Source: Statistical report of UIDSE+, 2017-2022

From this figure, it is clear that the primary dropout of all states shows an increasing trend and Kerala shows a decreasing trend.

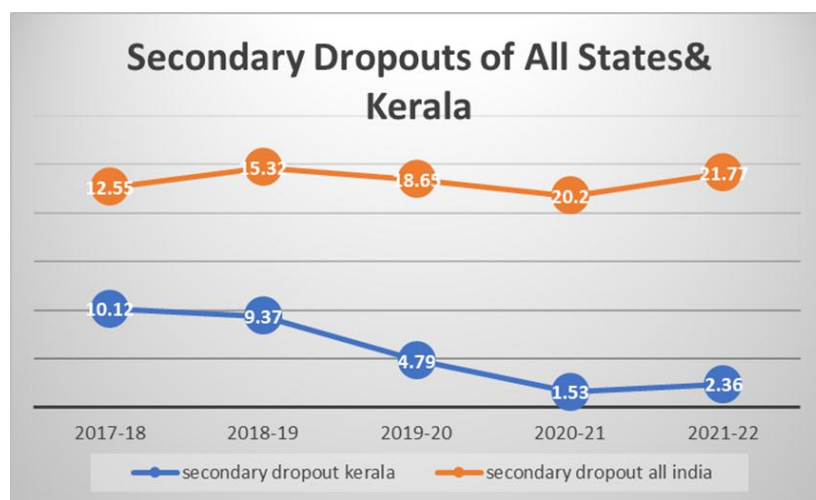
Figure II - Upper primary dropout ratio of all states and Kerala from 2017-2022



Source: Statistical report of UIDSE+, 2017-2022

From this figure, it is clear that the primary dropout of all states shows an increasing trend and Kerala shows a decreasing trend.

Figure III - Secondary primary dropout ratio of all states and Kerala from 2017-2022



Source: Statistical report of UIDSE+, 2017-2022

From this figure, it is clear that the primary dropout of all states shows an increasing trend and Kerala shows a decreasing trend.

Funding pattern of the scheme:

The funding ratio between the Centre and States is 60:40. However, for the North Eastern States and the states of Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh, the ratio is 90:10. For UTs without legislatures, the Centre provides 100% of the funds. The total number of scholarships

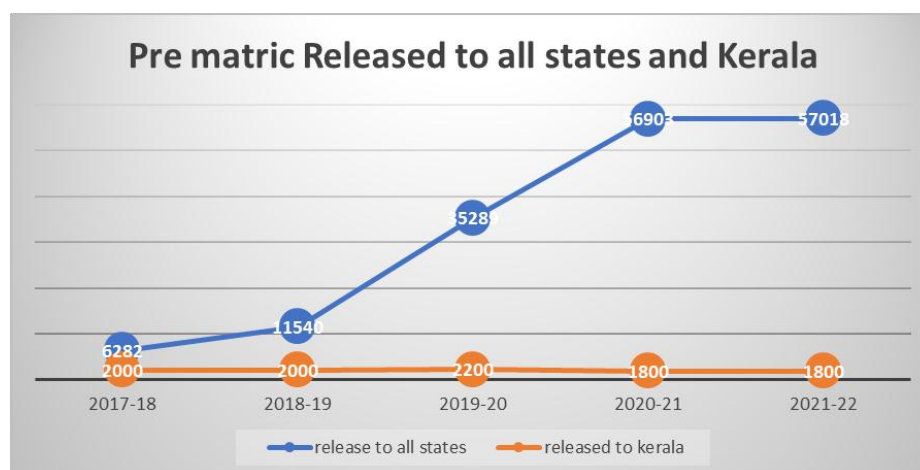
per year will be based on the highest number from the past three years for which a database is available. The sharing of funds between the Centre and State will be based on the total demand of eligible students under the Scheme for that particular year. All State Governments and Union Territory Administrations implementing the scheme should maintain data on all beneficiaries and the scholarship amounts on their online portals. The implementation of the scheme should follow the provisions of the General Financial Rules (2017). The below Table, Shows the central assistance released to all states and Kerala.

Table I - Pre-matric allocation & amount released during 2017-2022 (Rs in lakh)

year	central assistance to all states	Central Assistance to Kerala
2017-18	6282	2000
2018-19	11540	2000
2019-20	35289	2200
2020-21	56903	1800
2021-22	57018	1800

Source: Annual performance report of SJ&E and SCDD 2017-22

Figure IV - Pre matric scholarship released to all states & Kerala (in lakh)



Source: Annual performance report of SJ&E and SCDD 2017-22

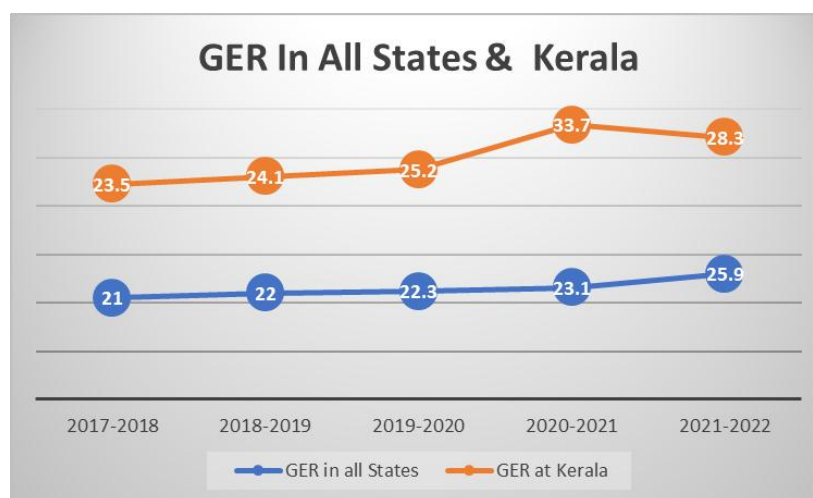
From the figure, pre-matric scholarship releases to all states show an increasing trend and in the case of Kerala, show a reduction from 2020-22.

II. Post-matric scholarship for scheduled caste students (1944)

Objective

The post-matric scholarship scheme serves a dual purpose: firstly, to increase the gross enrolment ratio of students from Scheduled Castes (SC) in higher education; and secondly, to offer financial support to economically disadvantaged individuals during the post-matriculation or post-secondary phase, facilitating the completion of their education. The scheme, along with other measures of the Government, has been successful in increasing the enrolment of SC students in post-matric education in all states and Kerala shown in the following Figure

Figure V - GER during the last 5 years in all states & Kerala



Source: All India survey on higher education 2021-22

The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in all States has increased over the years. GER for SC-Category has increased to 25.9 in 2021-22 from 23.1 in 2020-21 and 21.0 in 2017-18 i.e. 4.9 points increment over 5 years. Over a period, the scheme has resulted in considerably reducing the gap in Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for higher education (age group 18-23). But GER during the last 5 years of Kerala showed a decreasing trend in 2021-22 as compared with 2020-21. From 2017-18 to 2020-21 there was an increasing trend in the GER of Scheduled caste communities in Kerala.

Funding pattern of the scheme:

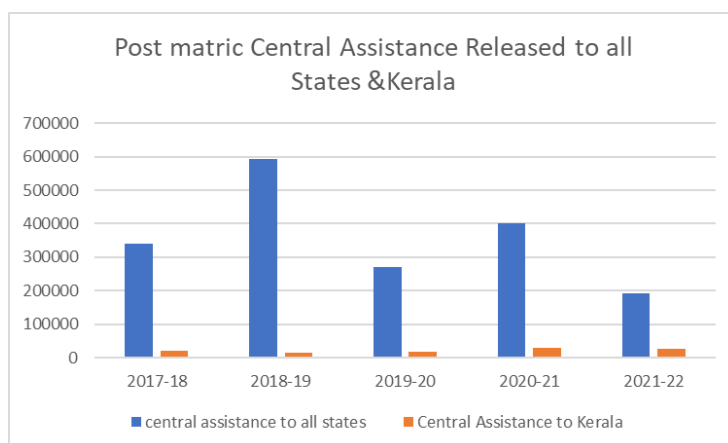
The scheme operates on a sharing ratio of 60:40 between the Centre and States (90:10 for North Eastern States). Post matric Central assistance from 2017-2022 is given to all States and Kerala shown in the below Table.

Table II - Post matric central assistance released to all states & Kerala from 2017-22(Rs in lakh)

year	central assistance to all states	Central Assistance to Kerala
2017-18	341409	20744.84
2018-19	592815	14891.02
2019-20	271130	16876.41
2020-21	400860	28383
2021-22	193038	26906.43

Source: Annual report of SJ & E, 2022-23

From the above table, it is clear that there are some fluctuations in the amount released in all States and Kerala for the post-matric fellowship scheme for the development of marginalised communities.

Figure VI - Post matric central assistance released to all states & Kerala from 2017-22(Rs in lakh)

Source: Annual report of SJ & E, 2022-23 & SCDD Kerala

From the Figure, it is clear that there is a huge fluctuation in the amount released by central to all the states and Kerala under the post-matric scheme for the educational development of scheduled castes during the period from 2017-2022.

Conclusion and suggestions

The primary aim of implementing the post-matric scheme is to enhance the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) among scheduled caste communities. However, while the scheme aligns with this objective, budget allocation and central assistance have exhibited fluctuating patterns

over time. In Kerala, recipients of post-matriculation benefits encounter delays in receiving fellowship funds, leading some to discontinue their education due to financial constraints. Therefore, the government must ensure the timely disbursement of scheme funds to students during their academic pursuits rather than afterwards. The pre-matriculation scheme marked its 40th anniversary in 2017 with the primary objective of extending financial support and curbing dropout rates among scheduled caste communities. Kerala witnessed a concerning 10.12% dropout rate at the secondary stage after four decades of the scheme's implementation, indicating a negative trend. However, there has been significant improvement as evidenced by the reduction of dropout rates to 2.36% in 2021-22. Budget allocation & central assistance released under the pre-matric scheme are almost utilised over the periods and the number of beneficiaries of the scheme has incremental trends over the periods. The Government should take the necessary steps to make the scheme amount available in time otherwise it may adversely affect the financially backward students.

References

- Suma Chitnis (1972), "Education for Equality: Case of Scheduled Castes in Higher Education", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 7, No. 31/33, August, pp. 1675-1681
- Joseph Kacharayil. (1998). An analytical study of some causes leading to educational backwardness of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe pupils. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Calicut University
- Sharma, K.L. 1994 *Caste and Class in India*, Rawat Publications New Delhi
- Singh, R.G. 1986 *The Depressed Classes of India*. B.R. Publishing Corporation, New Delhi
- Parwatamma, C. and Satyanarayan 1984 *New Horizons and Scheduled Castes*. Ashis Publishing House
- Annual performance Report of Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment-2017-2022
- Annual Performance Report of Scheduled caste Development Department -2017-2022