INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL FACTORS ON ADOLESCENT LEARNERS OF SCHOOL EDUCATION IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

'Human beings' and 'Society' are profoundly entangled. 'Society' is essentially a convoluted web of relationships, norms, institutions and cultures created by human beings. 'Human beings' as social creatures, depends on society for various aspects of their lives, including 'socialisation', cooperation and the accomplishment of their 'needs' and 'desires'. Through 'socialisation' process Human beings learn how to behave in society which begins in early childhood of life and continues throughout life, shaping individuals' beliefs, values, behaviours and their identities. This paper delves into the multifaceted relationship between social factors and school education development in India. Despite notable advancements, education in India continues to be influenced by various social dynamics, including socioeconomic status, caste, gender, and cultural beliefs. These factors have a significant impact on access to education, the quality of learning and educational outcomes. It is essential for policymakers, educators and stakeholders to comprehend these social factors in order to address the persistent disparities and ensure equal education opportunities for all. By analysing existing literature and empirical evidence, this paper aims to shed light on the comprehensive nature of social factors that affect school education in India and proposes strategies to mitigate their challenges consequences for promoting inclusive and fair educational opportunities.
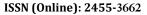
KEYWORDS: *Society, Socialisation, Social factors, Norms, Values, Adolescence, School Education, Social change, Well-being*

INTRODUCTION

A 'society' is commonly defined as a group of individuals concerned in determined 'social interaction', or a large 'social group' sharing the same geographical location, typically subject to dominant cultural outlook. According to Giddens (2009), society can be understood as "a system of structured social relationships connecting people together according to a shared culture". Furthermore, 'Society' can be viewed as this interaction results in the development of social institutions approximating family, education, religion, and economy that influence behaviour and socialisation processes (Haralambos & Holborn, 2013).

Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam said, "Real education enhances the dignity of a human being and increases his or her self-respect. If only the real sense of education could be realised by each individual and carried forward in every field of human activity, the world will be so much a better place to live in." Education serves as most powerful tool for advancement and progress of humanity. It acts as a guiding light, illuminating the paths towards enlightenment, empowerment and societal growth. Education not only shapes one's character but also fosters critical thinking, instilling values that shape both individuals and societies while freeing minds from superstitious beliefs. The development of a nation's economic, political and social foundation heavily relies on its educated human resources. At its core, education acts as a catalyst for individual empowerment, liberating minds and equipping learners with the knowledge, skills. In India, a country known for its diverse population and rich cultural heritage, numerous social issues intersect with its educational landscape. From deep-rooted poverty and caste-based discrimination to gender disparities and regional diversities, family structure the nation grapples with complex challenges that hinder the achievement of universal education. Adolescence is a period of significant change, encompassing physical, cognitive, psychosocial growth and socio-emotional transformations in the phase of life between childhood and adulthood (WHO, 2023). This makes it a crucial time for educational growth and development. In India, however, the education of adolescents is impacted by various social factors, which create obstacles to equal opportunities and high-quality learning experiences. Education is profoundly influenced by various social issues that permeate our communities. This article delves into the intricate interplay between social issues and education, exploring how factors such as poverty, inequality, discrimination, and mental health impact learning outcomes and educational opportunities. This article delves into the complex nature of these social determinants and examines their consequences for adolescent students within the Indian context.

EMERGENCE OF THE STUDY

The education system of any nation is always influenced by various factors that shape its formation and direction. In India, the learners' outcomes and achievements are dependent on societal approaches and interventions. Education and society have had a close association since the beginning of society itself. On one hand, education build up the individuals into different social roles; while on the other hand, 'society' and 'culture' determine the system of socialisation and the type of education to be imparted to its members. According to Berger and Luckmann (1966), 'socialisation' is the process, involves the internalisation of the values', 'behaviours, 'social skills' and norms of society, which helps individuals function effectively within it. Giddens (2009) emphasises the importance of socialisation in shaping individual identity and social roles or performances. Each society, regardless of its complexity, has its own way of educating the younger generation, leading to the development of specific institutions. Education serves multiple social functions by transmitting culture and knowledge, surroundings mankind on Earth. 'Society' plays a crucial role in the education process and in the end result 'social change' with 'mobility' occurs. Educational opportunities in India are greatly affected by socioeconomic disparities. Comfortable families have the means to send their children to private schools provide them with additional support in education and expose them to fortification activities. On the other hand, children from low-income households face obstacles like insufficient infrastructure and a lack of resources, which perpetuate the cycle of poverty and hinder their educational achievements. A study conducted by Jha and Gaiha (2017) exemplifies this issue, revealing that economically disadvantaged children are more likely to attend government schools that lack of facilities and adequate learning materials. Consequently, their educational outcomes are significantly impacted. Education is not solely about imparting knowledge; it also reflects societal values, norms and needs. In India, various social factors heavily influence the landscape of school education, shaping the experiences and outcomes of students from different demographic groups. Research by Desai and Kulkarni (2008) highlights the association between parental education and adolescents' educational outcomes, emphasising the role of socioeconomic factors in shaping educational trajectories. So, it is very much essential to understand the various issues and aspects of affecting social dimensions through revisit and reviewing the social factors, its present day relevance in Indian society to enhance school education considering all the learners in composite school structure. Social change encompasses shifts in societal norms, values, institutions, and structures, reflecting changes in cultural practices, economic activities, and political organisation. It often results from collective human actions and interactions that drive transformations in society's functioning and organisation (Harper & Leicht, 2011).

OBJECTIVES

i. To identify the various societal factors that influenced adolescent learners learning in India.

ii. To study the effects of various social factors on school education.

iii. To analyse critically the outcome of constraining socio-cultural factors on adolescents in education system.

iv. To revisit the aspect of socialisation and social change and its comprehend influence on adolescent learners' development at school level in India.

METHOD OF STUDY

A qualitative study was done based on the basis of review work. The previous studies results, reviewing and revisiting the documents, articles related to the problem i.e. social factors affecting among adolescent learners in school education. The data collected from the secondary sources which are available.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

i. What are the different factors that affecting school education in India?

ii. Why does poverty hinder academic performance of adolescent learners?

iii. How does socioeconomic status affect the adolescents in their education?

iv. What are the different factors that adversely affect adolescent learners' education in India?

v. What is the impact of social change on school education in India?

MAJOR FINDINGS: Social Factors affecting School Education in India

After reviewing the previous study, articles and literature including empirical study of the previous, some insight and reasoning factors are indentified which are the major issues which influences the school education system and learners specially the adolescence learners learning outcome and socialisation process are depends.

Poverty, Marginalisation and Educational Access

Poverty continues to pose a major obstacle in the pursuit of quality education. In India, where millions of individuals reside below the poverty line, this issue remains deeply ingrained. Economic deprivation restricts people's ability to obtain a high standard of education (Bhitale & Bhagyashree, 2022). In spite of considerable economic growth in recent decades, India continues to struggle with wide spread poverty, particularly in rural areas (Choudhury, Joshi & Kumar, 2023). Impoverished families find it challenging to cover expenses like school fees, uniforms and textbooks, impeding their academic progress. Additionally, children belonging to marginalised communities encounter additional hurdles in school education including insufficient resources, infrastructure (Makwana & Elizabeth, 2022) and lack of transportation, trained teachers in school (Nadar, 2018) which further widen educational disparities.

Socioeconomic Disparities

Ongoing socioeconomic gaps persist within educational systems globally. Children from lower-income families and

marginalized communities face numerous barriers, including limited financial resources and societal inequalities, which hinder their educational progress (Patel & Kleinman, 2003). These disparities perpetuate the cycle of poverty and limit opportunities for educational advancement. These discrepancies not only challenge the values of equality and equity but also sustain a pattern of academic underperformance and restricted prospects, further deepening the division between advantaged and disadvantaged students. A large number of families do not allow their children to receive formal education after completing primary and even before that. The child, who has not even reached the adolescence is entrusted family responsibilities and made to earn for the family (Thanky, 2013).

Regional Disparities and Access to Quality Education
India's extensive geographical and cultural diversity is reflected in its educational panorama, exhibiting notable disparities in infrastructure, teaching standards, and educational achievements across different states, regions and social development (Ghosh, 2011). Specifically, rural and remote areas encounter obstacles (Kumar, N. & Rani R. (2019) such as a scarcity of teachers, insufficient facilities, and language barriers, which impede educational accessibility and attainment. To address these regional discrepancies, focused investments in infrastructure, teacher training, and curriculum development are essential to pledge that every student, irrespective of their location, can avail themselves of a high-quality education.

Caste and Social Hierarchy
India's caste system remains a significant factor in determining educational opportunities and outcomes though the discrimination of caste system in India being legally prohibited still sometimes persists in social exclusion. Historically marginalised groups, including 'Dalits' and tribal or 'Adivasis', continue to experience discrimination and exclusion within educational institutions (Thorat & Newman, 2017). Caste and social hierarchy continue to pose significant barriers to accessing quality education in India, perpetuating inequalities and hindering social mobility (Soni, 2023). The caste system, deeply ingrained in Indian society, assigns individuals to social groups based on birth and traditionally determines one's social status including education, social mobility, cultural identity, areas of residence and so on (Jaipal, 2018). This hierarchical social structure has profound implications for educational opportunities. This has resulted in lower enrolment rates, higher dropout rates, and lower academic achievements (Nadar, 2018) compared to higher caste individuals. Despite efforts to promote inclusivity through legal measures and affirmative action policies, such as reservations in educational institutions, the disparities based on caste persist. These persistent disparities serve as a reminder of the deeply ingrained social hierarchies within Indian society.

Gender Disparities in Education
Gender disparities in education keep on as a global challenge, with significant implications for social, economic, and personal development (UNESCO, 2020). Despite progress in recent decades, disparities in educational access, enrolment, and outcomes persist between males and females in many parts of the world. Despite the strides made in promoting gender equality in education, gender disparities persist in many parts of India. Girls often encounter cultural biases, early marriage, and household responsibilities that hinder their access to schooling and limit their educational opportunities. It is also revealed that in India gender, poverty and education are intricately connected, highlighting the importance of implementing policies and community interventions that are sensitive to gender issues specially for girls' education development (Bandyopadhyay & Subrahmanian, 2008). Initiatives by the government like 'Beti Bachao', 'Beti Padhao' (Save Daughter, Educate Daughter) have aimed to address these disparities, and ensure equal access to education for all children, regardless of gender.

Cultural Beliefs, Norms and Practices
Cultural beliefs, identity and practices play a significant role in shaping attitudes towards education and impacting educational outcomes in India (Jaipal, 2018). The traditional understanding of gender roles, specific occupations deemed suitable for each gender, and societal expectations related to marriage and family responsibilities all have an influence on educational choices and aspirations. Moreover, cultural attitudes towards education differ across regions and communities, which in turn affect parental involvement, support for education, and attitudes towards learning. Cultural norms and practices can influence educational access, values, and ways of life and participation in the society (Maji & Das, 2023). In some regions, societal beliefs may prioritise certain types of education or restrict access based on gender, caste, or ethnicity, exacerbating disparities in educational opportunities. Positive cultural atmosphere for addressing the cultural obstacles to adolescent education and fostering inclusive learning environments among school learners are highly expected.

Well-being and Mental Health
The high occurrence of mental health problems among students presents a considerable impediment for educational establishments. By stress, anxiety, depression and other mental health disorders learning capabilities can be impaired, social interactions can be affected and academic performance hindered. Social support networks, including family, friends, and community ties, play a vital role in promoting mental well-being (Raman &Thomas, 2023). Active social interactions with learners provide emotional support, diminish feelings of loneliness & isolation, create happiness (NCERT, 2022) and buffer against the negative impacts of stressors, which is also crucial process for socialisation.

Domestic violence
Domestic violence can result in significant and enduring consequences on the education of adolescents, affecting their academic performance, mental well-being, and overall growth. Domestic violence is a pervasive social issue in India, with profound implications for the health, well-being, and rights of individuals, particularly women and children (Kishor & Johnson, 2004). Despite legal and social reforms, domestic

violence remains prevalent, fuelled by entrenched patriarchal attitudes, economic disparities, and cultural norms. Young individuals who are exposed to domestic violence within their homes may frequently be absent from school due to physical harm, fear, or the responsibility of taking care of themselves or other family members. Even when they do attend school, their ability to concentrate and actively participate in class may be compromised by emotional distress or preoccupation with the violence occurring at home. Witnessing or experiencing domestic violence can trigger a variety of emotional challenges such as 'anxiety', 'depression', low self-esteem, and post-traumatic stress can further obstruct their educational and socio-economic prospects. An adolescent who is exposed to violence may be at higher risk of substance misuse or either becoming a victim of dating violence. (Carolin & Xavier, 2020)

Substance Abuse
Adolescents who engage in substance abuse face numerous adverse consequences that can profoundly impact their physical health, mental well-being, academic performance, relationships, and future prospects. Poverty and economic marginalization increase susceptibility to substance abuse, as individuals may turn to drugs and alcohol as a coping mechanism for stress, trauma, and social deprivation (Ambekar et al., 2020). Substance abuse encompasses the misuse of alcohol, illicit drugs, tobacco, prescription medication, and other substances. This harmful behaviour can result in addiction, physical health complications, mental health disorders, academic under achievement, behavioural challenges, legal troubles, and sometimes tragically, fatal overdoses. Such kind of learners often stops social interactions which affect their socialisation process and actively affect their educational life. Tackling substance abuse among teenagers necessitates a holistic strategy encompassing prevention, timely intervention, accessible treatment and support services, educational initiatives, and community engagement to foster healthy behaviours and foster positive academic achievements.

Homelessness
Homeless children face numerous barriers to accessing formal education, including lack of documentation, transportation, and stable housing (UNICEF India, 2020). Enrolment processes that require proof of residence or identification documents may exclude homeless children from school, perpetuating their marginalisation. Homeless children experience psychosocial stressors, including stigma, discrimination and precedes mental illnesses, which impact their emotional well-being and social integration (Radhakrishnan et al., 2021). The experience of homelessness can lead to feelings of shame, insecurity, and low self-esteem, further hindering children's educational success.

Technological Access and Digital Divide
The potential for transforming education in India lies within the digital revolution, yet the existence of a digital divide poses a major obstacle to fully realizing this potential. The digital divide, characterised by unequal access to information and communication technologies (ICTs), is a significant social factor impacting various aspects of life, including education, employment, and social participation. In India, despite rapid progression in technology, disparities in digital access persevered, exacerbating existing social inequalities (Ranjan, 2023). Numerous students, particularly those hailing from rural and underserved areas, face challenges in accessing dependable internet connectivity, computers, and digital educational materials.

Disability and exclusion
Various physical and mental disabilities could act as a barrier for education. Marginalisation of education due to improper implementation of inclusion hampers adolescent education. Discrimination and stigma surrounding disability contribute to the exclusion and marginalisation of children with disabilities within the education system (Kalyanpur, 2008). Negative attitudes, misconceptions and lack of awareness among educators, peers, and communities perpetuate social isolation and limit opportunities for meaningful participation and learning. Social stigma around disability causes inadequate utilisation of inclusive education policies.

DISCUSSION
Poverty is the most significant obstacle that India's education system faces, impacting individuals, groups, and society as a whole. Psychologists believe that a person's development is influenced by their life experiences. Therefore, the key to helping individuals is to provide them with the necessary support and training in cognitive, motivational, and behavioural skills. This guidance will enhance their competence and enable them to function effectively in society. Psychological interventions have proven to be beneficial for the deprived and disadvantaged. However, we must consider a few important factors. Firstly, providing continuous assistance may result in psychological dependence and reliance on others, preventing individuals from taking responsibility for their actions and becoming self-sufficient. Secondly, psychological interventions may be implemented at individual, community, and societal level for school learners' inclusion towards socialisation limiting the exclusion. The introduction of modern technology as computers and the Internet have become integral parts of young people's lives. While these tools can be used for academic and social engagement, they also contribute to societal problems. Within a society, learners in adolescent level should take proper care to inculcate values, prompting them to advocate for a solution from any kind of confusion or barrier in the society. Since, society comprises individuals; any condition that affects certain members of the population like factors, such as family, health or financial concerns, indifferent school environment, substance abuse, transportation issues and differing community attitudes towards education, can contribute to negative social mobility for school student and that should be minimise.

SUGGESTIONS & POLICY IMPLICATIONS
Resolving the social issues impacting school education in India necessitates a comprehensive strategy involving policy changes, specific interventions, and involvement from the

community. It is imperative for policymakers to focus on ensuring fair access to high-quality education, tackling systemic disparities and encouraging inclusive educational methods. These goals can be accomplished by actions like increasing educational opportunities for marginalised groups, improving the standards of government schools, reinforcing affirmative action measures, advocating for gender-inclusive education, and establishing partnerships with communities to bolster educational programs. Training teachers and educational staff to recognise and address caste-based biases in the classroom is essential (Nambissan & Rao, 2021). Sensitization programmes can promote inclusive teaching practices and create supportive learning environments for all students. Local communities in education initiatives can help promote a sense of possession and support for schools may be engaged. Parents, community leaders and other stakeholders should be involved in decision-making processes to ensure that educational interventions meet the specific needs of the community. Raising awareness among the common people as well as in the society is very much essential for sustain quality education and proper socialisation among learners. Time to time curriculum reformation based on the modern societal needs is an essential parameter for providing quality education to the learners for sustaining inclusivity.

Taking into account the social aspects in education requires a comprehensive strategy that includes policy changes, specific interventions, and involvement from the community. It is crucial for policymakers to give importance to fair access to high-quality education, address systemic inequalities, and encourage inclusive approaches. For instance, initiatives like the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and other Govt. Schemes for school education strive to make elementary education accessible to all and reduce socioeconomic disparities by implementing targeted interventions in marginalised communities and National Education Policy, 2020 (NEP, 2020) also suggests so many provisions for development of School Education in India.
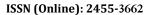
SIGNIFICANCE & CONCLUSION

The implication of the study is to create awareness among people about the existing issues that are adversely affecting adolescent education in India. This will help policymakers, researchers, educators, readers analyse the underlying causes that act as hindrances in the education system. The study will also give insights into the solutions towards reducing the various constraints social factors that challenges adolescent learners' education. 'Social factors' which influence social change and mobility play a pivotal role in shaping the landscape of school education in India, influencing access, equity, and outcomes. Addressing these factors is essential for building a more inclusive and equitable education system that empowers all children to fulfill their potential. 'Value Education' at school level should be incorporated for sustain peace and propagate quality education in the present society in India which also suggest by the study of Nadar, 2018. By recognising the complex interplay between social dynamics and education, stakeholders can work towards creating a more just and even-handed society where each child has the prospect to receive a quality education. By adopting policies based on evidence, encouraging community involvement and nurturing cultural sensitivity, India can strive towards achieving the goal of providing education to all, ensuring that each child has the chance to flourish and make valuable contributions to society. Addressing the complex nexus of social issues affecting education requires a multifaceted approach that prioritises equity, inclusion and holistic support for all students. By addressing poverty, dismantling systemic inequalities, promoting gender equity, prioritising mental health support and bridging the digital divide, societies can create more equitable educational systems that empower every individual to reach their full potential. Civil society with all stakeholders to work collaboratively towards this shared vision of a brighter and more inclusive future for Indian education.

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