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# **Students Educational Achievement at School Level: An Analysis across Social Categories**

**Citation: Sreekanth Yagnamurthy (2016). Students Educational Achievement at School Level: An Analysis across Social Categories, A paper presented in the International Conference on Social Statistics in India, organized by ADRI on 24-27 June 2016 at Hotel Maurya, Patna, Bihar, India.**

## **ABSTRACT**

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History has evidenced the power of education to induce changes (Flecha, 2011) in society. There could be disagreement about what consists of quality education or educational achievement of students, but hardly people disagree on the importance of quality educational outcomes for all students. Whether students are attaining desirable learning outcomes as expected is the question that needs to be addressed. Accordingly, in this paper the performance of students across the stages of schooling, and over the period of time is presented to provide a snapshot of the quality educational outcomes. The analysis is based on the students' performance in achievement surveys in three cycles in Class III and VIII surveys, and four cycles of Class V that have been conducted by NCERT between 2001 - 2016. The achievement of the students is compared across social categories and analyzed in the backdrop of educational qualification and occupational status of parents. The analysis is based on performance in mathematics and languages only. The findings reveal that higher socio-economic status has a positive influence on students mean achievement and the performance of SC and ST students is lower than that of OBC and General category students in general across the cycles.

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# Students Educational Achievement at School Level: An Analysis Across Social Categories

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## INTRODUCTION

History has evidenced the power of education to induce changes (Flecha, 2011) in society. Educational power emanates from quality and for this reason the emphasis at present is not merely on provisioning, but quality educational outcomes. There could be disagreement about what consists of quality education or educational achievement of students, but hardly people disagree on the importance of quality educational outcomes for all students, in a democratic and welfare state. Educational quality consists of provisions, processes and outcomes. At National level, the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) is involved in supporting the States/UTs in all the three areas. The provisions are monitored through conduct of periodic 'All India School Educational Survey', with eight cycles having been completed so far, since independence. The educational/pedagogic processes are monitored through 'Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation', utilizing multiple tools and techniques and also strategies of teaching-learning-assessment of students. The outcomes are evaluated through large-scale nation-wide achievement survey conducted at different stages of school education i.e., grade III, V, VIII and X.

Education that is offered to students varies across geographical locations and socio-economic categories of population, in general. Any discussions regarding education and how school variables affect students' attainment of education cannot be divorced from poverty, which encompasses poverty of students, their families, and of the community and that inevitably leads to poverty (Bouck, 2004) of the school. Ramirez's (2006, p.434) statistical interpretation of equity and educational achievement is pertinent:

*Schools need to be organizationally reformed in order either to maximize student learning and achievement or to minimize the effects of the unequal capital students bring with them to schools. The ideal, of course, is to figure out the right organizational mix that will result in increased achievement means and decreased standard deviations around these means.*

The inequity in educational opportunities is also largely attributed to immense growth of private sector in education. Accordingly, the role of government as a catalyst becomes critical as suggested by Sreekanth (2015, p.68) that ‘there is a need for government to plug the loopholes created in this process to ensure equity and provide justice across areas, student community and even in terms of courses being offered’. The widening of the scope of the reservation of seats to the EWS children in unaided private schools is also an extension of social responsibility to (Sreekanth, 2013, p.217) the private sector, ...

The Government of India has enunciated the scheme of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) in 2001-02, to provide useful and relevant elementary education to all children in the 6-14 age group (MHRD, 2004). While providing useful and relevant education to all is necessary, special focus is required on disadvantaged sections of students. In view of this ‘the national priority areas under this focused on inclusion and participation of children from SC/ST, and (Dyer, 2011) disadvantaged groups etc’. This included special provisions and budget allocation for the disadvantaged sections, curricular support and training of teachers to attend to the needs of these children, etc.

Whether these have resulted in desirable learning outcomes of students as expected is the question that needs to be addressed. More importantly whether all sections of the students, i.e., Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), Other Backward Communities (OBCs), and Others Category students are progressing on the expected lines, and more importantly how they are performing in comparison to each other is the question that needs to be addressed. Also, the performance of students across the stages of schooling, instead of one stage and over the period of time gives a better understanding of the quality educational outcomes. This paper attempts to address all these issues/concerns.

The analysis is based on the students’ performance in achievement surveys in three cycles in Class III and VIII surveys and four cycles of Class V. The mean achievement of students at state and national level under different categories is analyzed. State/UT is the sampling unit in the NAS and hence analysis further down the level of district or sub-district is not possible. For the purpose of comparing the achievement of different categories of students, ANOVA technique is used. In addition to this, through two-way ANOVA technique the educational qualification of

father and mother and their occupational status is analyzed in relation to mean performance of students under different categories.

The analysis is confined to mathematics and languages, though at different levels, other subjects were also administered as part of the survey mentioned below in table 1. Mathematics and Languages are the two subjects, wherein tests are administered at all the levels i.e., Class III, V and VIII. Further, languages and mathematics are considered fundamental in acquiring literacy and numeracy among students at school level.

## **EDUCATION AND EQUITY**

The *conceptual* definition of educational equity refers to the notion that all individuals have the same opportunity to enroll in, remain in, excel during, and graduate from an educational program (Maslak, 2009, p.255) of choice,... However, educational quality and outcomes are to a great extent dependent on students' parental and socio-economic background. Research conducted in Western countries shows that home background exerts an independent influence on academic achievement ... These include parental education, parental motivation, attitude, aspiration and interest, housing conditions and family culture, values and relationships, life-styles and (Velaskar, 1990, 135) language.

Educational costs are advertent or inadvertent and direct or indirect. These indirect or inadvertent costs are often ignored, undermining the reasons for participation in schooling by the children from lower socio-economic strata. In the context of schooling, economic constraints are translated into the inability of families to provide adequate resources to meet the direct and indirect costs of educating (Nambissan, 1996, p.1019) children.

In the simplest terms, students from higher social classes have higher achievement levels than students from lower social classes. This is also true of race and ethnicity, here dominant groups outperform (Sadovnik & Susan, 2010, p.2) subordinate groups. This is confirmed in a study conducted by Ramesh et al (2013), wherein it was found that parents' occupation plays a major role in predicting grades of their children. It will have multiplier effect, if the stakeholders happened to be disadvantaged in more than one way such as SC girls in Northern Karnataka (due to location, gender and socio-economic status), as observed by Bhagavatheeswaran et al., (2016, p.268) that:

*Our research confirms that gender inequality remains strong in these communities in North Karnataka and gender roles for girls are socially constructed and maintained in this context. This is amplified in the case of SC/ST girls, given their perceived lower status and worth.*

As a result, mere provisioning of basic facilities will not make a dent on the system and provisions have to be adequate and comparable in quality in the school system. The qualitative provisions are than a matter of degree, than kind. Lucas's hypothesis states that when a level of education becomes almost universal—and therefore quantitative inequality in attaining this level is likely to decrease—class inequality is primarily expressed through qualitative differences between academically and (Ichou & Vallet, 2011, p.168) socially stratified tracks. Further, apart from provisioning, active involvement of stakeholders is also necessary. Interventions that provide physical resources alone will not be enough to improve outcomes if workers delivering the service do not perform (Priyanka, Sangeetha & Venkatesh, 2010, p.75) as expected.

The educational quality and outcomes have a ripple effect on the educational progress and socio-economic opportunities to be accessed at global level. Poor performance at the end of school has serious implications for the representation and performance of dalit students in higher (Nambissan, 1996, p.1021) education. This gross inequality of educational resourcing ... that educational achievement is not just used by individuals within the borders ..., but by nations as a whole to compete with one another for a larger share of the global economic (Tannock, 2006, p.206) pie.

However, in India at national level there was huge dearth of information on students' outcomes. It is unfortunate that there is insufficient amount of specific data on the critical issue of inequalities in educational achievement - measured either in terms of years of schooling completed or academic (Velaskar, 1990,135) performance. Though, Annual Status of Educational Report (ASER) conducted annual surveys of students achievement, they had no scientific vigor due to inadequate sampling procedures, administration methods, tools and reporting mechanism etc. The National level achievement surveys conducted by National Council of Educational Research and Training since 2001 filled this vacuum by periodically conducting sample surveys of students across the States/UTs at regular intervals in a systematic and scientific manner.

## NATIONAL LEVEL ACHIEVEMENT SURVEYS

The progress made through universalizing of elementary education through SSA required assessing of learning outcomes of students from Grade I -VIII. Instead of undertaking the assessment at all school-years, it was proposed to be done at specific stages of schooling. Accordingly, Nation-wide achievement surveys were conducted at different levels of school education i.e., grade – 3 (mid-level of primary), grade-5 (terminal stage of primary) and grade-7 / 8 (terminal stage of elementary). The educational achievement of students was proposed to be monitored through BAS (Baseline Achievement Survey), MAS (Midterm Achievement Survey) and TAS (Terminal Achievement Survey), in line with the SSA project period. These surveys were expected to provide a health check of educational system across the educational levels and during different stages of implementation of SSA so that a review of periodic progress is possible. Later they were renamed as cycle I, II, III etc, so that they could continue beyond the envisaged project period of SSA. Following were the main objectives of the surveys:

- To study the achievement level of students of different subjects.
- To study the difference in achievement with regard to area, gender and social groups.
- To study the effect of intervening variables like home, school and teacher on students' achievement.

Following table provides the schedule of the conduct of the surveys:

### *Survey Cycles*

Cycle	COMMENCEMENT YEAR AND TOOLS		
	Class III	Class V	Class VIII
I	2003-04	2001-02	2002-03
II	2007-08	2005-06	2007-08
III	2012-13	2009-10	2010-11
IV	2014-15	2013-14	2014-15
Achievement Tests In Subjects	Language, Mathematics	Language, Mathematics, EVS	Language, Mathematics, Science, Social Science
Background Questionnaires	Student, Teacher and School		

**Table-1**

These surveys were conducted with utmost scientific precision, based on sample frame of the student population in the schools.

### *Survey Coverage*

CLASSES	States/UTs			District		
	Cycle I	Cycle II	Cycle III	Cycle I	Cycle II	Cycle III
III	29	32	35	111	254	303
V	30	33	31	113	244	271
VIII	29	32	35	103	189	303
X						
CLASSES	School			Teachers		
	Cycle I	Cycle II	Cycle III	Cycle I	Cycle II	Cycle III
III	5,293	7,341	8,364	8,533	10,369	16,728
V	4,787	6,828	6,411	10,796	14,810	10,851
VIII	4,378	9,239	8,015	16,612	24,071	32,060
X						

**Table-2**

### **CATEGORIES OF STUDENTS IN THE ACHIEVEMENT SURVEY (IN %)**

In the latest round of surveys at different stages, the following percentage of social categories students were covered. This is in conformity with the composition of population under different categories, with ST students' coverage being higher than that of their population.

Category/Class	Class VIII	Class V	Class III
SC	20.48	20.98	19.79
ST	17.97	17.16	20.83
OBC	31.42	35.64	32.65
Other	30.13	26.23	26.73

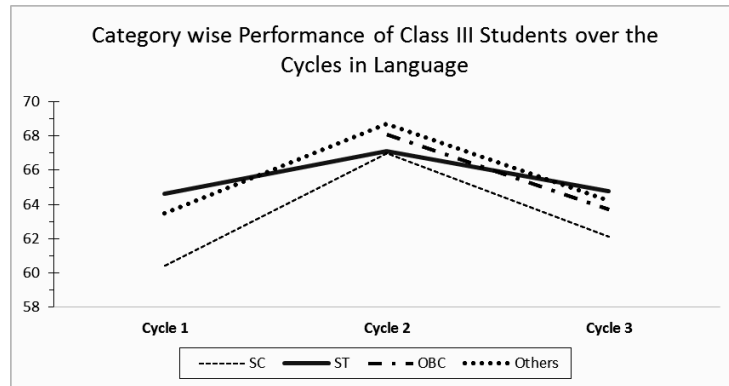
**Table-3**

### **PERFORMANCE OF DIFFERENT CATEGORIES OF STUDENTS**

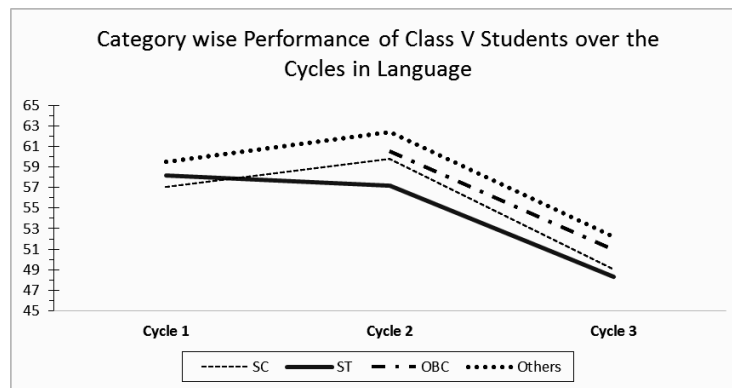
In this paper as outlined earlier, the performance of different social categories i.e., SC, ST, OBC and Others Categories across stages of school education is analyzed in language and mathematics, so as to review the progress of each category vis-à-vis other categories.



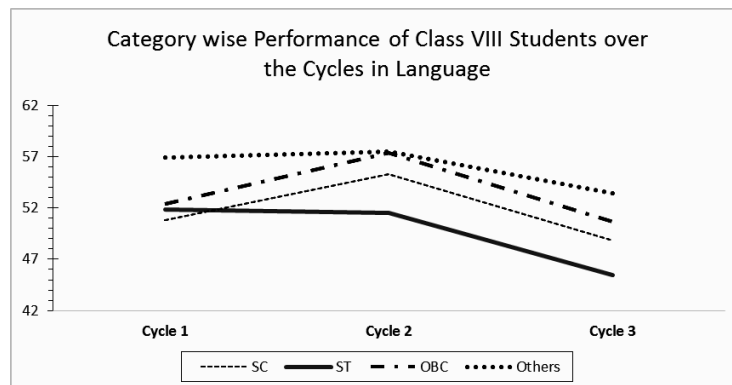
The mean achievement of students under different categories in language across the cycles and stages of school education indicate that Others category students have performed better than OBC, and OBC students have performed better than SC and ST category students. More importantly, this difference in performance is prominent as the students move from lower to higher classes. The only exception is in Class III, cycle 1 & 3, wherein ST students' performance is better than Others category students.



**Figure-1**

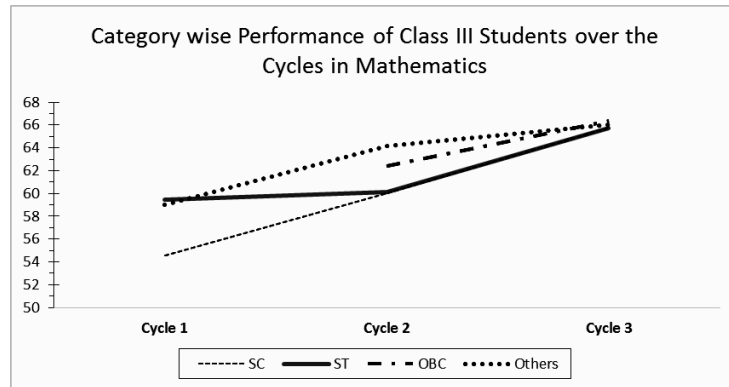


**Figure-2**

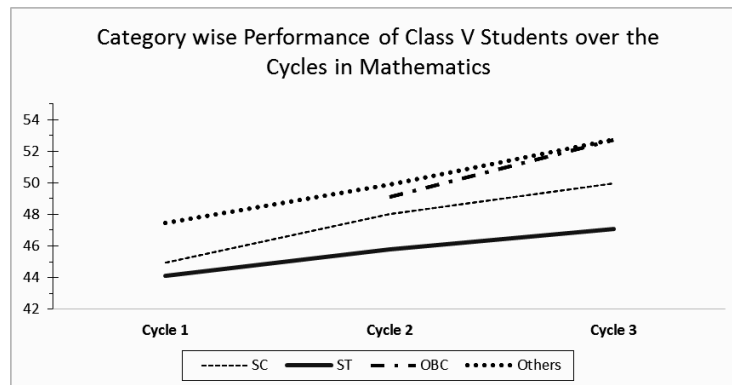


**Figure-3**

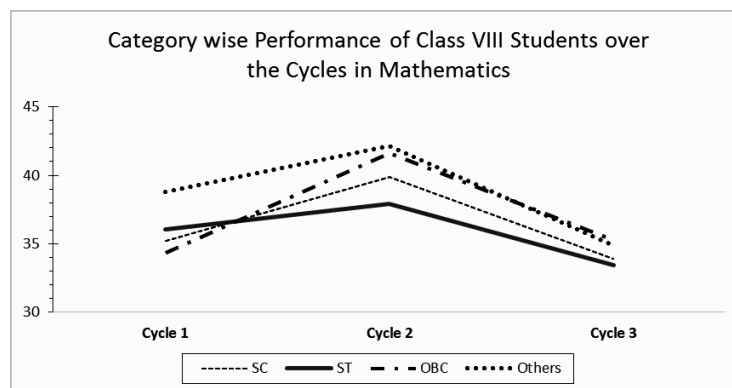
The mean achievement of students under different categories in Mathematics across the cycles and stages indicate that Others category students and OBC students have performed better than SC and ST category students, and at Class V & VIII in Cycle II and III SC students have performed better than ST students.



**Figure-4**



**Figure-5**



**Figure-6**

## **STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT IN LANGUAGES**

In order to study comparative performance of students and significance of difference, ANOVA technique was used. The mean achievement of students is significant in Class III, Cycle I across all the categories, except Others and ST categories. These two categories form homogeneous sub-sets. The mean achievement of students is significant in Class III, Cycle III all across categories. ST students' performance is better than Others, Others category students' performance is better than OBC, and OBC than that of SC students.

The mean achievement of students is significant in Class V, Cycle II and Others category students' performance is better than OBC and SC, and OBC and SC than that of ST students. OBC and SC students form homogenous sub-set, as there is no significant difference in the mean achievement between these two categories. In Class V, Cycle III there is significant difference among all the categories. Others category students performed better than OBC, OBC than that of SC, and SC students performed better than ST students. In Class V, Cycle IV there is significant difference all across categories, except ST and OBC. Others category students performance is better than that of OBC and ST, and OBC and ST than that of SC students. OBC and ST students form a homogenous sub-set.

In Class VIII, Cycle I there is significant difference in the mean achievement of all categories of students. Others category students performed better than OBC, OBC than that of ST, and ST students performed better than SC students. In Class VIII, Cycle II there is significant difference in mean achievement of all categories of students except that of OBC and Others category students. Others and OBC students form homogeneous sub-set and their achievement is better than SC, and SC than that of ST students. In Class VIII, Cycle III there is significant difference across all four categories of students. Others category students performance is better than that of OBC, OBC than that of SC, and SC than that of ST students.

## **STUDENTS ACHIEVEMENT IN MATHEMATICS**

The ANOVA results indicate that the mean achievement of students is significant in Class III, Cycle I across all the categories. The Others category students' performance is better than that of ST, ST than that of OBC, and OBC than that of SC students. The mean achievement of students is significant in Class III, Cycle III and there is significant difference between OBC students'

performance and SC/ST students' performance. There is no significant difference in mean achievement of students of Others, SC and ST students.

The mean achievement of students is significant in Class V, Cycle II and Others category students' performance is better than OBC, OBC than that of SC, and SC than that of ST students. In Class V, Cycle III there is significant difference among all the categories, except Others and OBC category students. Others category and OBC students performed better than SC students, and SC students performed better than ST students. In Class V, Cycle IV there is significant difference across all categories. Others category students performance is better than that of OBC, OBC than that of and SC and SC than that of ST students.

In Class VIII, Cycle I there is significant difference in the mean achievement of all categories of students. Others category students performed better than ST, ST than that of SC, and SC students performed better than OBC students. In Class VIII, Cycle II there is significant difference in mean achievement of all categories of students. Others students performed better than OBC students, OBC than that of SC, and SC than that of ST students. In Class VIII, Cycle III there is significant difference across all four categories of students, except ST and ST students. Others category students' performance is better than that of OBC, OBC than that of SC/ST students.

Though at national level the performance of students of Others category students is better than that of OBC, and OBC than that of SC/ST students, at State level there are some exceptions either over the cycles or in specific cycles. In Class III Mathematics, SC students of Mizoram and Nagaland have performed significantly better than Others, OBC and ST students across the three cycles. In Puducherry, ST students have performed better than all other students in Class III Mathematics in all the three cycles. Other than these, the performance of SC/ST students is not consistently better than Others category students in any subject or stage of school education over the cycles. The following table provides information on states with SC/ST performance equal to or more than that of Others category students in two out of three cycles.

Sl. No.	States - SC/ST	Class III- Maths	Class III Lang	Class V Maths	Class V Lang	Class VIII Maths	Class VIII Lang
1	Punjab - ST	*	*	*	*	*	
2	Haryana - ST	*	*				
3	Manipur - ST	*	*				
4	Uttarakhand - ST	*	*			*	
5	Puducherry - ST	*	*				
6	Assam – ST		*				
7	Mizoram - SC	*	*				
8	Delhi – SC		*				
9	Nagaland - SC	*					
10	Chandigarh - ST			*	*		
11	Manipur – SC				*		
12	Sikkim – ST				*		
13	Tripura – SC				*		
14	Bihar – ST			*			
15	Goa – ST			*			
16	Puducherry - SC			*			
17	Uttar Pradesh - ST			*			

**Table-4**

In the above table it is apparent that most of the States/UTs where the performance of SC/ST students is better are largely smaller States and/or belong to north eastern region. The initial gains made by the students in several states in Class III mathematics and languages are not sustained in Class V and VIII.

### **EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS OF PARENTS AND STUDENTS ACHIEVEMENT**

The following table provides a glimpse of the educational qualifications and occupational status of the fathers whose children's educational attainment is analyzed in the latest round of surveys conducted at Class III, V and VIII. About 20 to 25 per cent of the children's fathers under various surveys are illiterate. The Class V, fourth cycle is the most recent one and under this category the number of fathers with illiteracy is lower than other stages, which is a welcome trend. About 20 to 33 per cent of the fathers are educated up to primary level only (Class V), which along with illiterate and merely literate fathers amounts to more than 50 per cent. The family support for these children through fathers could be nil or very meager as the fathers themselves are not qualified to guide, and this can have impact the educational quality of their wards. Less than five per cent of fathers are graduate and above, which is a small proportion of

the children surveyed. The following chart provides mean achievement of students under different categories in relation with varying educational qualifications of the fathers.

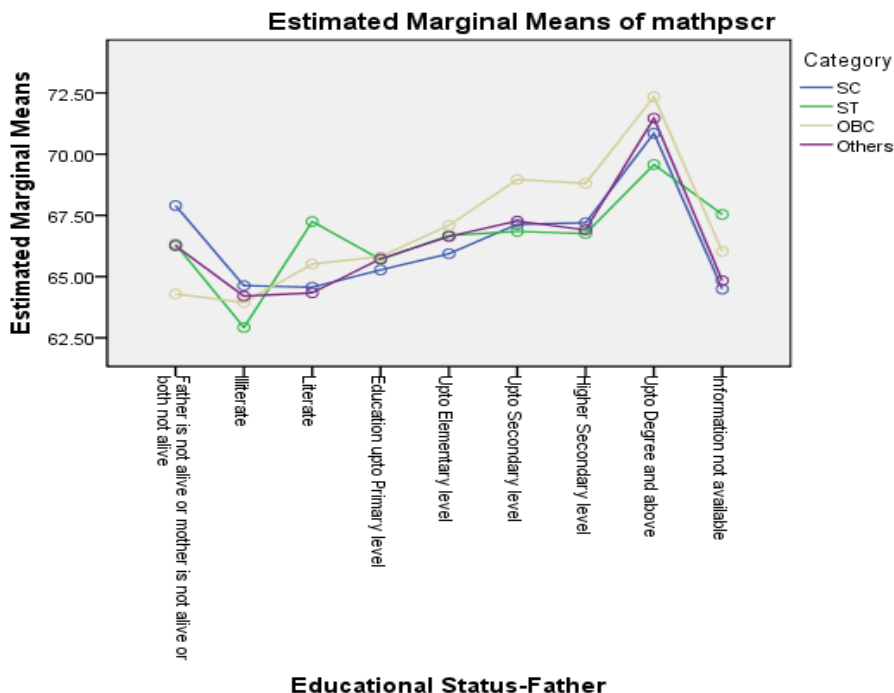


Figure-7

The above chart indicating the relationship of students mathematics mean achievement in relation to fathers educational qualifications shows a clear progression in the mean achievement of fathers with illiteracy to graduation and above.

The following table provides information on educational qualifications and employment status of the fathers in the latest round of surveys conducted (third cycles of Class III and VIII and fourth cycle of Class V).

Educational Qualification of Father	Class III	Class V	Class VIII	Employment status of Father	Class III	Class V	Class VIII
Father is not alive or Mother is not alive or both are not alive	4.49	4.08	-	Father is not alive or Mother is not alive or both are not alive	4.38	4.15	-
Illiterate	19.40	15.62	25.49	Clerk	-	-	5.31
Literate	12.85	10.69	-	If parent or guardian is Unemployed	3.38	2.26	9.59
Education upto Primary level	21.25	21.29	33.31	Household or Housewife	1.54	1.04	-
Education upto Elementary level	15.62	17.40	-	Agricultural Labour or Domestic Servant	45.99	47.44	21.96

<b>Educational Qualification of Father</b>	<b>Class III</b>	<b>Class V</b>	<b>Class VIII</b>	<b>Employment status of Father</b>	<b>Class III</b>	<b>Class V</b>	<b>Class VIII</b>
or Middle				or Daily Wager or Street Vender			
Education upto Secondary level	13.83	17.07	25.17	Farmer	23.16	21.70	32.99
Education upto Higher or Senior Secondary level	6.50	7.52	7.44	Skilled Worker or Office Worker	11.80	12.33	12.36
Education upto Degree and above	2.35	3.37	4.06	Shopkeeper or Businessman	6.91	8.03	10.46
Information not available	3.70	2.96	4.54	Teacher or Lecturer or Professor	1.09	1.38	1.74
				Manager or Senior Officer or Professional	0.77	0.91	1.47
				Information not available	0.98	0.76	4.11

**Table-5**

There is significant difference in the achievement of the students under different categories with varying father's educational qualifications. For instance, in Class III the achievement of students with illiterate fathers is 64.62 per cent and the same is 70.85 per cent for the students with fathers qualification of graduation and above under the SC category. This is much above the mean of Others category students with 66.01 per cent, which means that educational qualification of father is an important predictor of the achievement of students. The same is true under other categories also. The ST category children with illiterate fathers have a mean of 62.92 per cent and the same is 69.57 per cent of children with fathers qualification of graduation and above. Mothers educational qualifications is also an important indicator as the mean achievement of students with illiterate mothers is 64.38 per cent only, but it is 71.40 per cent for students with mothers up to graduation and above.

The findings also indicate that with increasing educational qualification of the fathers, the students mean percentage has also increased. This is evident from the Class III mathematics achievement survey mean of students with illiterate fathers – 63.92; up to secondary level - 67.55; and up to degree and above – 71.05. The Class III survey fathers qualifications across categories also indicate that the percentage of illiterate fathers is more in SC (21.53) than Others category (15.18) and lower in graduate and above with 1.93 under SC and 3.56 under Others category.

It is not only the fathers qualifications, but also the mothers that is widely varying across categories. While mothers of SC category children, who are illiterate under the Class III survey

accounted for 37.88 per cent, the same is 29.23 per cent under Others category. Under this, mothers with graduation and above accounted for 0.72 per cent in SC category and 1.59 per cent under Others category. From the above data it can be said that SC category students' parents have lower educational qualifications than Others category students' parents and this has also impacted on the mean achievement of the students.

## OCCUPATIONAL STATUS AND STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT

The economic status of fathers is also widely varying. Three to ten per cent of the fathers under various surveys are unemployed. Between about 21 to 48 per cent of fathers are agricultural laborers or daily wagers. The unsecure employment status of fathers would have possible negative impact on their children's education, as they have to fend for themselves to earn living. Less than two per cent of fathers are teachers or senior professionals. The following chart provides information of mean achievement of students under different categories in relation with father occupational status. The mean achievement of students with fathers who are unemployed being lower than that of those students whose fathers are teachers or senior officers.

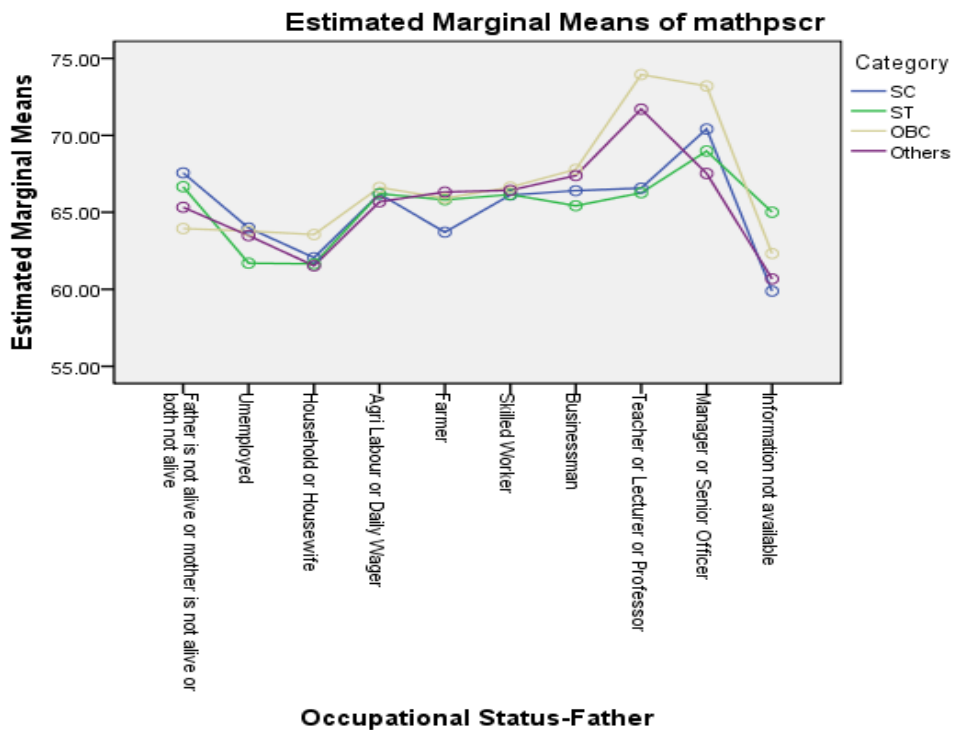


Figure-8



In the Class III survey 48.09 per cent of the fathers are agricultural laborers or daily wagers. Only about 0.8 per cent account for manager or senior officer level fathers, which is a meagre representation of higher economic status fathers. About 55 per cent of the fathers belong to unorganized sector and have insecure employment. Like in the case of educational qualifications, employment status of the fathers does have an impact on the mean achievement of their children. The children with unemployed fathers have a mean achievement of 62.99 per cent, agricultural labourers or daily wagers with 66.21 per cent and that of manager or senior level officers of 69.42 per cent. This is not only true with regard to overall mean, but under all social categories. It indicates that there is a clear progression based on the occupational status.

Under the Class III survey, less than three per cent of mothers are businesswomen/teachers/senior level officials. About 65 per cent of the mothers are housewives. The employment status of mothers like in case of father has positive association, with mean achievement of students with housewife mother being lower than that of mothers who are teachers/senior level officials. Hence, from the above data it is apparent that fathers/mothers educational and employment status has considerable and positive association with the achievement of their children.

## **DISCUSSION**

In this study an attempt is made to review the performance of the students under different social categories. Three of the major socioeconomic categories are defined by caste combinations: Forward Castes (FCs), Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (SC/ST), and Other Backward (Chandra, 2008, p.217) Castes (OBCs). These surveys are conducted in government and government aided schools, which have skewed composition of student population in terms of socio-economic status as evident from this study and also others. It is fairly well known that in most areas, elementary schools run by the government primarily cater to the very poor while the not-so-poor opt for private schools, even in rural and (Vimala and Taramani, 2013,p.44) remote areas. Though 'education is being given importance by all, quality education differs among different types of schools such as Muncipal Corporation of Delhi Schools, Kendriya Vidyalaya Schools, Public Schools and International (Sreekanth, 2009) Public Schools in Delhi'

Educational quality and learning outcomes of the students seen in isolation with family background of the students will not give a clear picture of the progress of the students. Higher the involvement (of parents), reasonably better the success of the child in education, as it involves stretching their capacity for the wellbeing of their children, which serves as a positive reinforcement in the (Sreekanth, 2010, p.43) children's education. Taken together, addressing the poor quality of education, changing community gender norms that are socially constructed and teaching parents about the benefits of education . . . ., are all key areas for policy makers and programme implementers to (Bhagavatheeswaran et al., 2016, p.269) focus on.

Further, the evidences in the above study do indicate that parental educational qualifications and employment status matter significantly and positively (higher socio-economic status of parents leads to better educational outcomes of their children) in the achievement of students at macro level. The SC and ST sections have had consistently lower literacy rates as compared to the overall national (Chandra, 2008, p.221) figures. This is in conformity with the international scenario also. Disadvantaged minorities, by definition, come from disadvantaged backgrounds with many characteristics that are associated with poor academic performance— few educational resources in schools, low levels of parental (Hanna & Leigh, 2012, p.147) education, etc. The assumptions about the capacity of education institutions to overcome educational inequalities have come to be seen as (Carlo, 2011, p.1) increasingly unsustainable.

Added to this is multiple disadvantages that certain sections of student population face such as SC/ST girls with poor economic background. Membership in these groups (Scheduled Castes) is highly correlated with poverty and rural location (more than 70 per cent live in rural areas). The high student enrollment of SC/ST/OBC categories in the left-wing extremism districts, which are backward, inaccessible with meagre facilities and educational quality as reported by Sreekanth (2013, p.268) highlights the disadvantage under which these students are being educated;

*'Of all the 33 districts, 15 districts have SC population above 20 percent and of these six districts have more than 25 percent of SC populations. The ST enrollment is more than 50 percent in ten out of the 33 districts, with the highest level in Dantewada (79.53 percent). In all, 16 out of the 33 districts have OBC enrollment of more than 40 percent'.*

The depth of social exclusion creates a huge challenge (Wu et al., p.119) for India. The current study substantiates the earlier research that disadvantaged families children need to struggle to achieve in education. Though the Indian government has been making concerted efforts since independence to bridge the socioeconomic gap between the advantaged and disadvantaged groups, SCs and STs have remained socially, economically and culturally deprived because of their specific occupational and geographical (Chandra, 2008, p.217) conditions. SC/ST girls often faced exclusion on the bases of caste and their poor (Bhagavatheeswaran et al., 2016, p.266) academic performance. This does not however, take away the responsibility of educational institutions to initiate change and strive for improvement of the most disadvantage sections of the society. In a study, it was found that ‘when schools are good, learning in schools makes up for some of the household differences in learning and when students are not learning in school, family factors continue to matter more for (Priyanka, Sangeetha & Venkatesh, 2010, p.78) learning outcomes’.

In order to bring about improvement in the learning among disadvantaged sections of the society, teaching-learning needs impetus. In a study of impact of District Primary Education Project in Kolar district (Prema, 2003), it was observed that ‘embedded cultural dimensions are resistant and antagonistic to the change process. Those designing teacher training modules need to consider how the cultural dimensions of teacher thinking and teaching relate to the intended objectives...’

Quality education in government schools is the most debated issue in the Country, with increased opting out of parents from government to private schooling. In a study (Sreekanth, 2014, p.65) ‘it was found that the parents have opted for the private school in spite of having choice of government schooling, where nominal or no tuition fee is paid’. The challenge of raising the standards of education must happen at primary level, as this is the most sensitive stage wherein the system can retain the students with good quality education or allow them to dropout for innumerable reasons such as lack of interesting teaching-learning experiences, material and other provisions etc. India must raise student achievement in primary schools. Without a solid foundation, girls and other marginalized groups cannot compete at the next level, and they lose out in the (Wu et al., p.139) labor market.

## CONCLUSION

This study underlines the importance of family support in the students achievement. The economic status has overwhelming impact on students achievement than the social status, as students belonging to higher economic status with better educational qualifications and occupational status have higher learning achievement, irrespective of their social categories. The lower achievement of students from SC/ST categories is more to do with their multiple disadvantages, than only belonging to a particular social category. When their mobility to higher occupational status happens with increased educational qualifications, their children have better possibilities of achievement in education. The key takeaway in this study is that quality education of the students leading to better employment opportunities not only benefits the students themselves, but has a potential of helping their offspring to achieve better, overcoming the barriers of social categories. Hence, every attempt needs to be made to reach out to all the sections of students to provide quality education, especially those who are disadvantaged in multiple ways.

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**Anova Results : MATHEMATICS**

Sl. No.	Cycle	SC			ST			OBC			Others			f-value	p-value
		n	Mean	SD	n	Mean	SD	n	Mean	SD	n	Mean	SD		
1	Grade III, Cycle-I	17600	54.60	25.72	17368	59.43	23.60	29014	57.15	25.45	28423	60.92	24.19	269.628	.000
2	Grade III, Cycle - III	20149	62.72	20.54	21184	65.72	19.79	33194	66.35	20.97	27234	65.99	20.21	5.84	.001
3	Grade V, Cycle-II	15342	47.94	20.00	16774	45.54	19.75	26033	48.85	20.17	22000	49.92	20.16	162.03	.000
4	Grade V, Cycle – III	15312	49.95	21.74	13626	47.08	19.62	25456	52.68	21.92	21348	52.76	21.10	267.33	.000
5	Grade V, Cycle - IV	20040	45.59	20.72	16489	43.71	18.95	34166	47.48	21.23	25169	46.47	20.53	132.50	.000
6	Grade VIII, Cycle-I	16897	35.24	15.50	14511	36.07	15.31	29692	34.30	14.03	44431	38.78	17.73	519.84	.000
7	Grade VIII, Cycle-II	16651	40.94	17.05	14628	38.64	17.53	33710	42.45	17.85	27248	43.33	18.06	251.112	.000
8	Grade VIII, Cycle- III	18029	31.62	16.28	15859	31.82	15.65	27368	33.11	16.74	26255	32.53	15.67	39.24	.000

**Table-6**

**Anova Results : LANGUAGE**

Sl. No.	Cycle	SC			ST			OBC			Others			t-value	p-value
		n	Mean	SD	n	Mean	SD	n	Mean	SD	n	Mean	SD		
1	Grade III, Cycle-I	17600	60.42	22.58	17367	64.65	21.62	29012	62.55	22.53	28420	64.44	21.27	157.451	.000
2	Grade III, Cycle - III	20141	62.09	20.39	20973	64.78	19.83	33049	63.69	20.53	27454	64.21	20.47	67.35	.000
3	Grade V, Cycle-II	15342	53.18	21.55	16766	51.09	21.29	26029	53.65	21.31	21996	56.21	21.28	187.98	.000
4	Grade V, Cycle – III	15086	49.05	24.27	13455	48.36	22.63	24988	50.925	24.59	20424	52.23	23.52	92.82	.000
5	Grade V, Cycle - IV	19956	43.82	23.20	16198	44.84	22.02	33437	45.28	23.57	24817	46.71	23.33	59.86	.000
6	Grade VIII, Cycle-I	16897	50.82	19.33	14511	51.87	18.39	29692	52.42	18.65	44431	56.91	19.33	632.65	.000
7	Grade VIII, Cycle-II	16651	56.31	18.21	14628	52.29	18.98	33710	57.93	18.20	27248	58.20	18.55	389.935	.000
8	Grade VIII, Cycle- III	18195	44.88	21.68	16199	42.78	20.51	27411	47.10	22.19	26329	48.99	21.98	313.64	.000

**Table-7**