

CAN POVERTY BE SIGNIFICANTLY ELIMINATED PERMANENTLY?: AN INVESTIGATION

Dr. Seema Pareek*

ABSTRACT

Education is the only tool which brings changes in society, alleviates the society and reduces poverty permanently. There are various segments of the society that are marginalized as far as education is concerned like SC, ST and female. It has been established in various studies that minimum secondary level education is must to achieve the upliftment of the society. Poverty is one of the biggest problems in our nation. Today employment generation programmes are the only strategy to reduce poverty, but it is only a temporary solution. Education is the only way out to reduce poverty permanently. But at the same time poverty does not allow parents to retain their children in school. Children are assets in poverty so it is more profitable to send their children to farm fields or engage with any earning activity rather than send them to school. This paper analyses the relationship between level of education and poverty. It investigates the effects of poverty on education. The paper examines the effects of poverty among various marginalized segments of societies like SC, ST, Girls etc. The paper establishes the relationship between Drop Out Ratio and poverty. Finally the paper suggests a targeted intervention scheme to reduce Drop Out and create a permanent dent on poverty.

Keywords: poverty, Upliftment of the Society, Drop out Ratio, Intervention Scheme.

Introduction

According to **UNESCO**, 2006 education is required by human beings to be able to survive, to develop their full capacities, to live and work in dignity, to participate fully in development, to improve the quality of their lives, to make informed decisions, and to continue learning.

Education is the only tool which brings changes in society, alleviates the society and inculcates scientific temperament. The socio, demographic and economic upliftment can be achieved by education only, so educational development is must in a way that every person of every section of the society like a SC,ST, female etc. must complete at the secondary education so that the desired changes in society can be achieved.

Poverty is one of the biggest problems in our nation, after 70 years of Independence India is fighting to eliminate poverty. Poverty is also considered as one of the biggest obstacles for inclusive growth. Since poverty is much higher than unemployment, employment is the only source to eradicate poverty. The country is facing poverty in all sectors, regions and various groups particularly for the population of backward regions, lagging sectors and SC/ST/OBC/women etc.

Various programmes, schemes have been launched by Central and state governments but poverty is still one of the biggest problems of the society. Various wage based and self employment schemes have been undertaken as a mission but poverty cannot be eliminated from the society, although it is reduced due to these programmes but could not be eliminated.

Thus poverty is a great threat to the nation, actually poverty is directly related to education, so to reduce poverty education can play the most important role. Hence, to know the role of education in reducing poverty should be analyzed. How education or education levels can influence poverty or is there any negative correlation between poverty and education?

* Associate Professor, Seth R.L. Saharia Government P.G. College, Kaladera, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India.

Poverty and education are inter related to each other. Poverty affects the level of education and education affects poverty to reduce. So education is required to reduce poverty but poverty does not allow education, thus creating a vicious circle between poverty and education.

The following table 1 shows the relationship between level of education and poverty.

Table 1: Poverty by Education Level of the Head of Household

Education level of Household head	Share in Population	Percent Population below the Tendulkar line				Percentage point poverty reduction	
	2011-12	1993-94	2004-05	2009-10	2011-12	1993-94 to 2004-05	2004-05 to 2011-12
Rural							
Illiterate	39.4	60.8	53.9	44.5	33.9	6.9	20.0
Primary or less	26.9	44.9	40.0	31.4	26.1	4.9	13.9
Middle	15.1	36.5	30.3	24.6	20.0	5.2	10.4
Secondary or Higher Sec.	14.7	24.2	21.0	19.1	12.2	3.2	8.8
Higher Education	3.9	13.5	11.0	7.0	5.4	2.5	5.6
Total	100.0	50.3	41.8	33.3	25.4	8.5	16.4
Urban							
Illiterate	17.9	57.8	53.0	44.8	31.6	4.7	21.4
Primary or less	19.9	40.0	37.2	31.8	19.2	2.8	18.0
Middle	14.8	28.7	22.5	20.7	14.0	6.2	8.5
Secondary or Higher Sec.	27.0	14.0	11.3	10.4	6.8	2.6	4.5
Higher Education	20.3	36.6	2.6	2.2	1.5	1.0	1.1
Total	100.0	31.9	25.7	20.9	13.7	6.2	12.0
Rural+Urban							
Illiterate	33.2	60.4	53.8	44.5	33.5	6.7	20.2
Primary or less	24.9	43.8	39.4	31.5	24.5	4.4	14.9
Middle	15.0	33.9	28.0	23.5	18.3	5.9	9.7
Secondary or Higher Sec.	18.2	19.1	16.9	15.6	9.9	2.2	7.0
Higher Education	8.6	6.6	5.6	3.7	2.8	1.0	2.8
Total	100.0	45.7	37.7	29.9	22.0	8.0	15.7

Source: NITI Aayog

The above table can be analyzed as follows:

- There is an inverse relationship between levels of education and poverty ratio. As the level of education increases the poverty ratio decreases.
- Highest poverty is in the illiterate group both in rural and in urban areas.
- The lowest poverty is among the higher educated people but the moderate level of poverty is among secondary level education people.
- The rate of reduction in poverty is highest in illiterate groups and lowest in higher education level, but in higher educated people the poverty level is lowest so naturally the rate of reduction is low.

To reduce poverty at least it should be ensured that each and every person must complete at least Secondary Education. If it can be done, the level of poverty would automatically be reduced, because secondary level education empowered a person to deal with their life properly. Secondary level education converts a person into an asset rather than liability. India is facing 34% poverty among illiterates, 25% among primary educated, 18% among middle level educated, 10% among secondary educated and only 3% among higher educated people.

Poverty is not just a cost to individuals; it is also a drain on public resources. Reducing spending on preventative, proactive services that reduce poverty can be self-defeating in the long-run. Poverty can also generate a vicious cycle whereby people are not motivated to invest in their own education, skills and careers if they perceive their job prospects to be a low-paid, 'dead-end' job, or worse still, no job at all.

If we enhance the education level of a person he is able to earn and come out from poverty, permanently. If we analyse further; the poverty is higher in rural areas than urban areas among all education levels of the household head. On this basis we can conclude that another factor that affects poverty is urbanization or opportunity of work.

But the pattern of poverty among various education level households in rural and urban areas is the same, it implies that the level of education certainly affects poverty.

From the above analysis it can be concluded that as the level of education enhances, poverty reduces sustainably.

Chart 1a: Education Level and Poverty (Total)

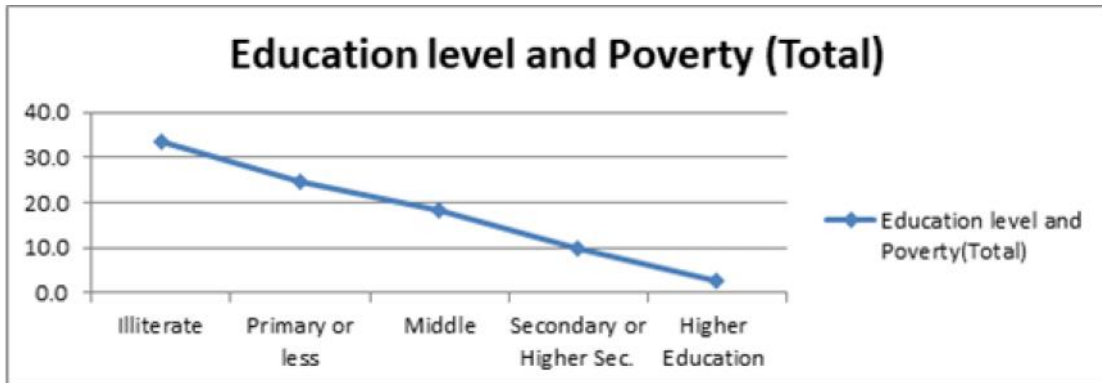


Chart 1b: Education Level and Poverty (Rural)

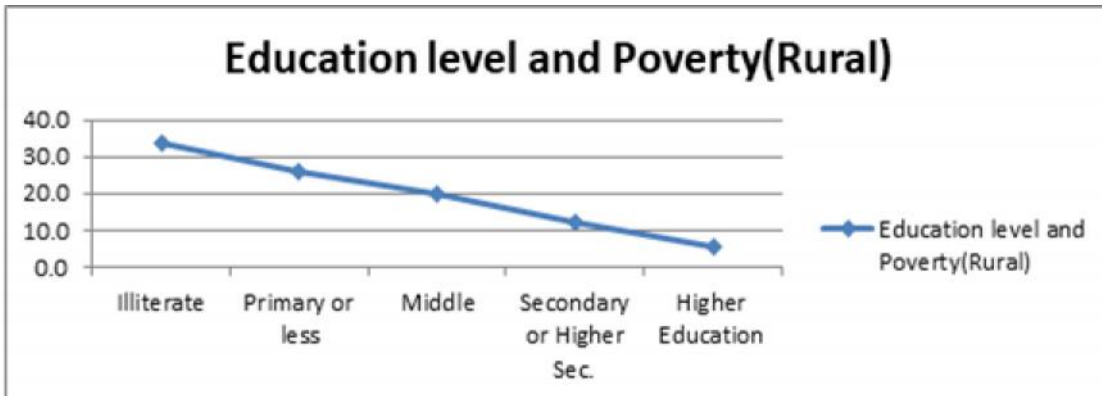
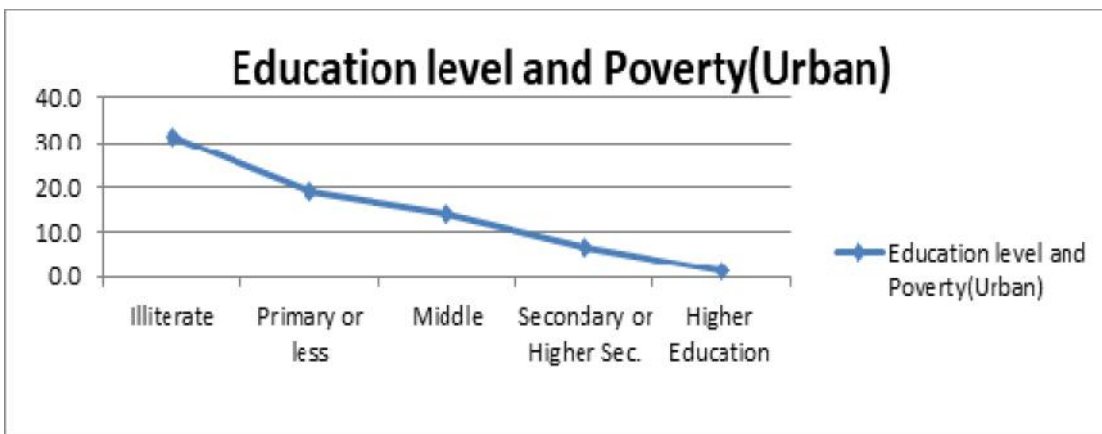


Chart 1c: Education Level and Poverty (Urban)



Source: table 1

Thus the policy to reduce poverty must be linked with education. Poverty reduction programmes and educational programmes must go together. Presently they are separately run. These two programs should be linked to each other for better results.

When it has been established that the level of education reduces poverty, the causes of low levels of education are analyzed, one of the most important factors that hamper the education is high dropout ratio.

People enroll their child but they discontinue them before completing the school education. This is the basic reason for high dropout ratio is poverty. A grown up child is an asset for a poor family. They send them to the field, agriculture farm or engage them in any earning activity so that they can survive. The living standard at below survival level can force families to drop out their children from school and engage them in earning activities.

The following table 2 has shown the relationship between the DOR (boys, girls) and poverty.

Table: 2 Relationship between DOR and Poverty

States	DOR Boys Secondary				DOR Girls Secondary				All Groups poverty			
	1993 - 1994	2004 - 2005	2009 - 2010	2011 - 2012	1993 - 1994	2004 - 2005	2009 - 2010	2011 - 2012	1993-1994	2004-2005	2009-2010	2011-2012
Andhra Pradesh	77.23	62.3	52.7	45.5	82.38	65.24	54	46.3	44.9	30.0	0.0	9.3
Assam	80.21	75.18	77.4	74.1	78.79	74.69	77.8	70.7	52.5	35.0	38.4	32.5
Bihar	83.38	81.46	71	70.8	89.16	85.64	65.6	71.9	60.8	54.6	53.7	34.1
Gujarat	68.54	58.01	60.4	49.5	74.43	61.05	64.4	59.3	38.4	32.5	23.2	17.0
Haryana	54.32	28.01	20.2	23.6	62.58	37.72	19.5	18.5	36.0	24.2	19.9	11.2
Himachal Pradesh	47.56	0	22.3	7.3	55.29	0	18.9	7	35.0	23.0	9.4	8.0
Jammu & K	66.87	54.63	47.2	45.5	70.85	52.53	40.6	42.6	26.7	13.2	9.2	10.6
Karnataka	66.28	59.71	46.9	37.9	75.36	58.99	46.3	36.6	50.3	33.9	23.8	21.2
Kerala	35.8	10.64			26.72	3.52			31.6	19.8	12.0	8.1
Madhya Pradesh	68.5	60.48	47.3	32	82.14	70.31	60.6	53.7	44.8	49.2	37.3	32.0
Maharashtra	60.22	52.11	38.6	35.9	71.2	56.4	42.6	38.8	48.6	38.9	24.8	17.3
Odisha	73.3	66.4	70	62.3	76.09	61.46	65.9	61.6	59.5	57.6	37.3	32.9
Punjab	51.13	43.68	41.2		55.19	44.49	39.5	2.2	22.4	21.0	15.8	8.2
Rajasthan	81	69.33	70.5	54.3	85.5	80.72	73.4	69.4	38.4	34.5	24.8	14.8
Tamil Nadu	65.85	57.27	37.6	41	70.5	52.71	30.3	35	45.0	30.7	17.4	11.7
U.P.	64.6	40.49	25.2	44.2	74.15	48.99	7.2	50.7	48.6	41.0	37.8	29.5
West Bengal	85.53	75.92	72.9	62.6	88.48	80.34	70.7	58.5	40.0	34.9	27.1	20.4
All-India	69.7	60.41	53.3	48.6	75.35	63.88	51.8	52.2	45.7	37.7	29.9	22.0

Source: NITI Aayog & MHRD

To investigate it, a correlation is to be analysed between DOR and poverty.

Table 3: Correlation Coefficient between DOR and Poverty

Year	Boys	Girls
1993	0.54	0.57
2003	0.56	0.58
2009	0.50	0.44
2011	0.59	0.70

Calculated from the above Table

The above table shows that:

- There is a positive relationship between poverty and the DOR, which means as poverty increases DOR increases and vice-versa.
- The correlation Coefficient between DOR (boys) and poverty is .54 in 1993 and .59 in 2011. The correlation coefficient in 1993, 2003, 2009 and 2011 are between 0.54 to 0.59, which shows the reliability of correlation between poverty and DOR (boys).

- The correlation between poverty and DOR (girls) is also established. The correlation Coefficient is again 0.50 to 0.70 which is a high correlation that means if poverty is high the DOR in girls is high.
- The correlation between DOR (girls) and DOR (boys) and poverty both depicts the close relationship between poverty and DOR. Now it has been established that poverty and DOR are highly positively correlated.

In this section we have also investigated poverty and DOR among SC and ST groups in which the DOR is extremely high. The following tables 4 and 5 show the relationship between poverty and DOR among SC and ST.

Table 4: Poverty by Social Group

Social Group	Share in Population	Percent Population below the Tendulkar line				Percentage point poverty reduction	
	2011-12	1993-94	2004-05	2009-10	2011-12	1993-94 to 2004-05	2004-05 to 2011-12
							Rural
ST	11.1	65.9	62.3	47.4	45.3	3.7	16.9
SC	20.8	62.4	53.5	42.3	31.5	8.9	22.0
OBC	45.0		39.8	31.9	22.7		17.1
FC	23.0	44.0	27.1	21.0	15.5	9*	11.6
ALL	100.0	50.3	41.8	33.3	25.4	8.5	16.4
							Urban
ST	3.5	41.1	35.5	30.4	24.1	5.6	11.4
SC	14.6	51.7	40.6	34.1	21.7	11.1	18.8
OBC	41.6		30.6	24.3	15.4		15.2
FC	40.3	28.2	16.1	12.4	8.1	5.8*	8.0
ALL	100.0	31.9	25.7	20.9	13.7	6.2	12.0
							Rural + Urban
ST	8.9	63.7	60.0	45.6	43.0	3.7	17.0
SC	19.0	60.5	50.9	40.6	29.4	9.6	21.5
OBC	44.1		37.8	30.0	20.7		17.1
FC	28.0	39.5	23.0	17.6	12.5	8.1*	10.5
ALL	100.0	45.7	37.7	29.9	22.0	8.0	15.7

Source: NITI Aayog

Table 5: Correlation Coefficient between Poverty & DOR (SC, ST)

Group	DOR in 2004	DOR in 2009	DOR in 2011	Correlation Coefficient
ST	78.70	74.9	65.9	0.80
SC	71.25	59.0	55.3	0.95

Source: Calculated from above table

A proportionally large share of the poor is lower castes. Many see the caste system as a system of exploitation of poor low ranking groups by more prosperous high ranking groups. In many parts of India, land is largely held by high ranking property owners of the dominant castes that economically exploit low ranking landless laborers and poor artisans, all the while degrading them with ritual emphasis on their so-called god given inferior status.

The following conclusions can be drawn from the above tables:

- There is a very strong correlation between poverty and DOR in SC and ST both evident in table 5 The correlation coefficient between poverty and DOR in SC is 0.95 which is ultra high. While it is 0.80 in ST people which is also very high.
- The DOR is high in ST compared to SC people. Similarly the poverty is higher in ST than SC. The above analysis shows that there is a strong relationship between poverty and DOR, the relationship is highly strong in SC and ST.

There is a positive relationship between poverty and DOR. The positive relationship between poverty and DOR presented in the following chart-

Chart 2a: Poverty and DOR (Boys) (POVDO Boys)

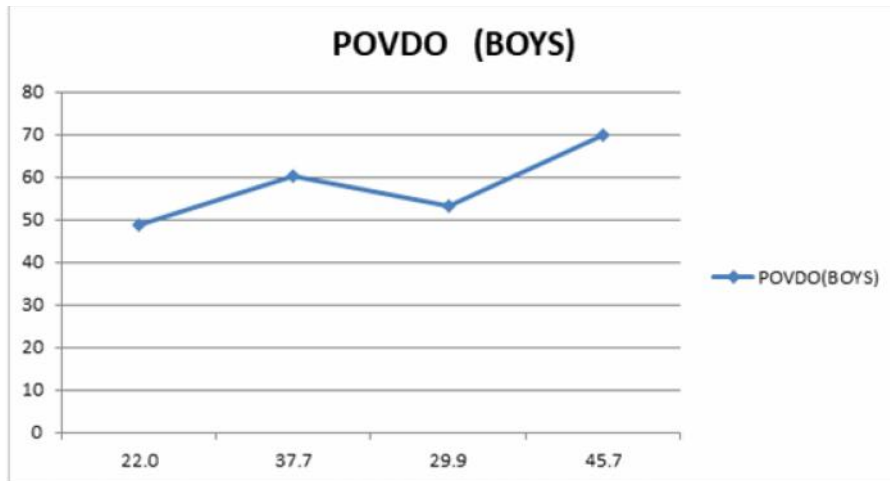
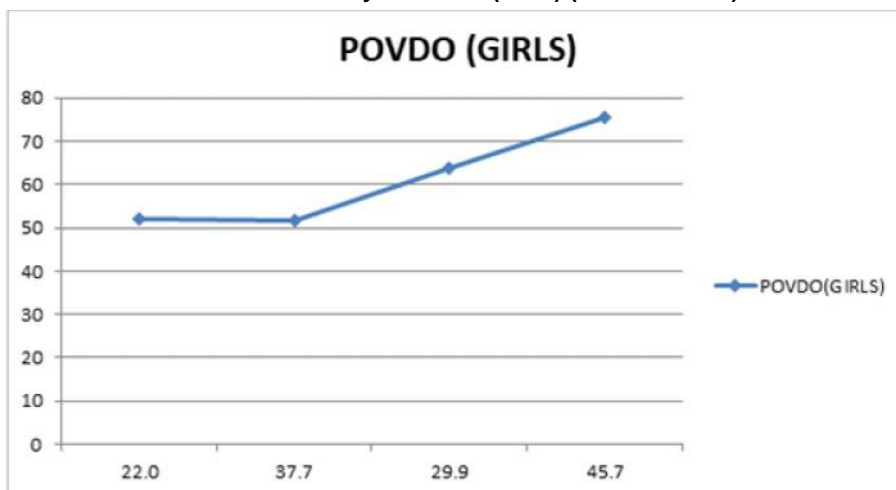


Chart 2b: Poverty and DOR (Girls) (POVDO Girls)



Source: Table 2

Chart 3a: Poverty and DOR (SC) (POVDO SC)

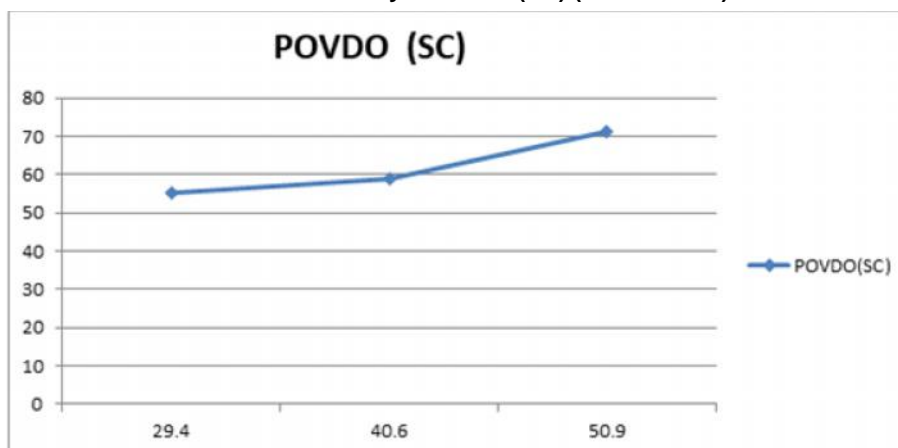
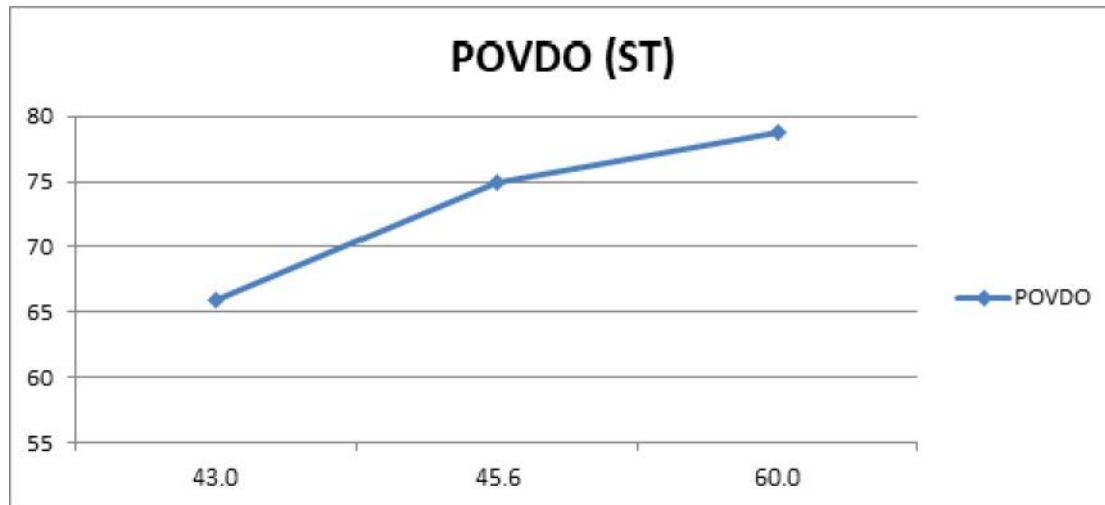


Chart 3b: Poverty and DOR (ST) (POVDO ST)

Source: table 4

The above positively sloped **POVDO curve** illustrate that the positive relationship between Poverty and DOR, means if poverty reduce or increase the DOR will reduce or increase.

The most important factor regarding education is derived from above analysis is dropout; a crucial parameter for sustainable education. A complete and proper education system is established only by reducing dropout ratio at the minimum level. First The utmost requirement is to reduce the dropout ratio ,the government must focus on a specific scheme or policy to reduce Drop Out Ratio; while GER has already been achieved at the optimum level by various efforts made by the government. Inclusive economic growth and employment generation are the focus of current economic policies and planning. High growth, however, is not a sufficient condition for poverty reduction, the sources and pattern of economic growth as well as the way in which its benefits are distributed is equally important from the point of view of achieving the aim of poverty reduction and employment plays a vital role in that context.

Second ,the policy to reduce poverty must be linked with education. Poverty reduction programmes and educational programs must go together. Presently they are separately run. These two programs should be linked to each other for better results.

On the basis of the above analysis policy for poverty reduction linked with education is required for eradicating poverty and enhancing education in the country, therefore such a policy is suggested in the study.

Poverty and education are interlinked issues but are dealt with separately. People are sending their children to primary schools; there is no issue until they complete their primary education. As they get admission in secondary education they are supposed to earn money rather than complete their secondary education. Poverty forces the parents to withdraw the children from school and engage them in any economic activity like- in farms, at shops, on construction sites and many times in dangerous industries also. Due to poverty parents do not support their children to complete their education.

They do not have enough food for the entire family; lack of enough food increases the Drop out as we can see that DOR is higher in SC, ST communities, where poverty is also high. So the poverty, hunger and shortage of food for the entire family cause the higher dropout. In other words it can be said that if you want to reduce the dropout, sufficient availability of food for the entire family is to be ensured. The suggested policy is based on it.

Equity in Education is challenging and it can be broken down by taking care of socioeconomic standing, race, gender or disability. For education equity a strong foundation of a society that is fair and thriving is must. We suggest the **BHOJAN- PATHAN** scheme for **educational equity and Education for All**.

Features of the BHOJAN- PATHAN Scheme

1. Each household who does not send their wards to the school are identified and a list of those households is prepared.

2. Today one time food at school is available to the school going children but this is not sufficient actually. Problem of food for the entire family forces the dropout. Hence to stop dropout the food for the entire family is to be ensured in this scheme two times food is to be made available for the mother, father and the children. It means the entire family is to be assured of two meals a day for those who are sending their children to the school.
3. The provision for food safety should be from class 6 to class 12th so that the dropout in secondary school can be reduced.
4. The attendance may also link with availability of food.

The purpose of the scheme is to provide food safety net to the family, so due to hunger and poverty parents don't drop their children, rather they ensure their children's 100% attendance to the school, because now the children who are going to school are not a liability but an asset.

The family thinks that when our children go to school regularly, only then they can get sufficient food easily and enable them to fight with poverty and hunger. Thus the effect of poverty can be minimized on dropout and education can be enhanced. By this way the vicious circle of poverty can break down and at least secondary education is ensured for all, the poverty automatically reduces drastically. The food link education policy can help to enhance education and reduce poverty for all.

Education Policy makers should be aware about the gender gap, social gap in education especially at secondary education level and necessary arrangements has to be made in education policy for reducing the gender gap and social gap. Necessary incentives are to be given to the ST community which is most deprived in having access to secondary education. Drivers may be one of the strategies to enhance the DOR and increase the GER for ST community. A mission campaign is to be required for ST and girls for secondary education. ST and girls are the vulnerable section of the society those who have to be spaced effectively at Secondary Education level.

References

1. Dasgupta, D.P., Maity, Mukherjee, R, Sarker, S and Chakraborty, S. (2000). 'Growth and Interstate Disparities in India', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 35(27).
2. Dickson, M. and Harmon C. (2011), "Economic returns to education: What we know, what we don't know, and where we are going. Some brief pointers", *Economics of Education Review*, 30(6): 1118-1122.
3. Drewnowski, Jan. (1966). *Social and Economic Factors in Development*, UNRISD Report, No. 3, Geneva.
4. Govinda, R. (2002), *India Education Report: A Profile of Basic Education*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press.
5. John Vaizey (1961) *Comparative Notes on Economic Growth and Social Change in Education*, *Comparative Education Review*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (Jun., 1961), pp. 7-12, The University of Chicago Press
6. Mehrotra, S., and E. Delamonica (2007) *Eliminating Human Poverty: Macroeconomic and Social Policies for Equitable Growth*, Zed: London.
7. Nayyar, Gaurav (2005). 'Growth and Poverty in Rural India: An Analysis of Inter-state Differences', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 40(16).

