Dalit Children Dropout in Schools: Need for Inclusive Curriculum
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Abstract
Dalit children are generally marginal with respect to students of other categories, and their dropout rate is an alarming situation in India. Scholars, social scientists and educationists have tried to understand the reasons of student disengagement from the school system and have revealed various causes and given many varied suggestions that are related to a child’s family background and socio-cultural background. Although several attempts have been made to understand the reasons for dropout, still it is not explored well. Also, cultural politics for dropout of particular group is not yet explored at the micro and macro levels. In this article, we try to understand how school, through its structures and ideology including textbook culture, influences student’s decisions to stay out. This study also considers traditional explanations for understanding the socio-background behaviours of the children for dropout. At the same time, we try to understand the role of school in Dalit children dropout.

Keywords
Curriculum, Dalit, dropout education, periphery, school, textbook culture

Introduction

Education for All, School Education for Whom

Education can be used as a powerful instrument for dysfunction inequalities and at the same time, it can be used for promoting human development and social justice. In this regard, schools play a significant role. Education provided by the school is important for any individual as it acts as main primer as well as catalyst for socio-economic development. At the same time, it is important because education of children is a fundamental human right. The question arises here as to why education is important for the society? Education acts as a fundamental component of individual emancipation and achievement in life. It further enables individuals to make their livelihood, to live without fear of being subordinate and to build healthy lives. Amartya Sen, in his work Development as Freedom (1999), refers to education as a central part of ‘social opportunity’ alongside other facilities such as health at the micro and macro
societal levels. Education ensures political freedom, economic growth, development and security. Nevertheless, education also enhances the opportunity to attain other development goals, including the millennium development goals (MDGs). School is a total institution (Goffman, 1959) which provides education for children and acts as an agent of socialization (Cooley, 1909). School socialization is pertinent for economic and social development, and dropping out of children from primary elementary school is a threat to the society. Scholars, social scientists and educationists, with the various government bodies, have tried to understand the reasons of student disengagement from the school system, and have revealed various causes and given many suggestions. In a drop out situation, many factors are involved. The factors are related to the child’s family background and socio-cultural background. Although several attempts have been made to understand the drop, it is not as yet well explored. Cultural politics for the dropout of particular groups is not yet explored at the micro and macro levels. Very limited studies in this regard reveal the role of school in the discontinuation of the children. School curriculum isolates the students through their vices and virtues as every student has a different history and ethnicity and they experience a silence of culture. So, our study has offered the role of school curriculum as momentous factor because it has direct association to the case of dropout. Ultimately, our study intends to talk about why the dropout of any particular community is directly associated to cultural politics of the school. In the present study, our endeavour is to confine our demarcation within the discussion of school dropout among the Dalit children. Hence, we intend to conceptualize drop out in school in general and, at the same time, Dalit in particular. There are few questions which explore the relation of Dalit cultural milieu with school dropout in marginalized communities. How school legitimizes and validates mainstream history in the name of student socialization? What is the role of school curriculum in student disengagement? Does cultural heritage have any role in school curriculum or pedagogy development and how, at the same time, it deprives peripheral communities from educational development? To what extent democratizing the syllabus of the school can address Dalit children’s school dropout issue? Keeping these questions as the basic primer, the resultant production delineates the diverse stories of school dropout of Dalit children in the country. As we know, India is a country of diverse population having different narrative and history, diverse ways of life with the details of specific metaphor of their own, as seen in the case of Musahars of South Bihar (Kumar, 2004, 2005). The social life world also differs from one group of students to other. Existing curricula only serve the interests of a particular society and represents their constructed bourgeoisie history. Curricula fail to represent marginalized history. The dialectic of different history isolates the weaker section beliefs. The Little Tradition of the particular community is not placed well in the mainstream Great Tradition. So, this study tries to understand the role of Little Tradition and the local belief and history that resulted in dropping out.

The pattern of the present article goes from introducing the concept of Dalit, then funnelling to Dalit education and then to the crux from the perspective of the school as a social system. School as a social system is used to focus on the dynamics of central and peripheral communities, with the understanding of how their cultural milieu and textbook culture interact in their daily lives at the classroom level and how it results in the alienation of the peripheral community from the school system due to lack of adaptation. While attempting to understand this school alienation reflected in the dropout of the peripheral community, it is necessary to incorporate the peripheral Little Tradition into the main textbook culture of the education system. Following the details of the interaction of these two groups of communities with the school system and their representation in the form of Great Tradition and Little Tradition, we see how they hegemonize one particular group of the society. Having said that, in conclusion, the possible way suggested is incorporating the peripheral cultural milieu in the main education system through the inclusion of heritage, history and social realm of knowledge of these marginalized communities in the textbook culture. Apart from this, there is a need of reform in the education system, not only confined to the textbook culture, but also to readily interact with the local ecological knowledge of the group of which children take education.
Locating Dalits in the Education System

Dalit communities are the marginalized group which includes the major chunk of the total population of India. The term Dalit is a local term used for a group of people who have been traditionally perceived as untouchables. This group is not a single stock of population, but rather a conglomeration of mixed population, consisting of numerous social groups from all over India. They speak diverse languages and subscribe to a multitude of religions and customs. In traditional society, there were many different names proposed for defining this group of people, including panchamas\(^1\) and asprushya (‘untouchables’). In the Constitution of India, they are commonly termed as the Scheduled Caste (SC) group, meaning the Dalits are listed in a separated scheduled list to get benefitted. There are various debates regarding the term Dalit in the usage of the SCs, but the majority of the literature in the field regard SCs as a more common criteria to denote these groups. For the simplicity of meaning, the present article uses the terms Dalit and SC interchangeably.

As per the 2011 census, the SCs constitute 24.4 per cent of India’s total population. The Dalit population is broadly distributed across Indian states and districts. The state of Punjab had the highest proportion of its population as Dalit, at about 31.9 per cent, and the state of Mizoram had the lowest at nearly zero. They are marginalized by the historical process of socio-economic deprivation and exclusion. Approximately, half of the SC population can be found in five states of the country, namely Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. Seeing their condition, huge efforts are being made by way of starting and implementing numerous schemes and programmes for the uplift of this specific group. In this context, come the provisions of equality enshrined in the Constitution, such as abolition of untouchability (Article 17), equality before law (Article 14), equality in terms of education and economic activities, social protection against injustice of exploitation (Article 46) and positive discrimination in terms of having democratic opportunities (Articles 350 and 353 of 73rd Amendments Act of 1992). Apart from this, the Constitution incorporates special provisions for setting up permanent bodies for tracking the socio-economic progress of the SC people in India. To prevent harassment, assault, discrimination and other criminal acts on SCs and Scheduled Tribes (STs), the Indian government introduced the Prevention of Atrocities (POA) Rules on 31 March 1995. Also, a historical attempt of the state has come forth in 2009 when the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 made important provisions in this respect. The main objectives of this Act are to overcome educational deprivation. Despite the hard work done by the state, this population category still lies far behind the rest of the population of the country.

Scheduled Caste Who? Who are Scheduled Caste People?

The term ‘Scheduled Caste’ came in the picture in 1932 by a committee set up for British India\(^2\) and added to the Government of India Act, 1935 for administration of the whole of India. Prior to this, this specific group was termed as ‘depressed group’ by the colonial administrators. Through Article 341, parliament can notify the special group as SC (Scheduled Caste) by the President with the help of Governor as per the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950. Further, same executive body has role in modification of the list of Schedule Castes. So, by this creation and modification list from 1950 to contemporary time there are 1231 groups listed in Schedule caste list. The Constitution used the Draft of 341 for enlisting, representation and modification of the list of this group. Furthermore, in this vein, ‘scheduled’ means scheduled in the Constitution and ‘caste’ as such caste, race, tribe or part of a group which are deemed under Article 341 of the Constitution to be SCs for the purpose of the Constitution. This technical definition of SC does not give us any idea of their special character, or how we define or
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see these particular groups as different from rest of the population of the country. In this list, groups which are socially, educationally and economically backward by the traditional practice of untouchability are included. There are criteria for determining their backwardness, especially in terms of social and economic factors, which are as follows:

1. They occupy low position in the ladder of the social structure
2. They have less number of representations in government and field of trade, commerce and industry
3. Experience of social and physical isolation from the rest of the groups
4. Lack of education

Dalit Education: Special Need for Special Communities

Although all the criteria needed more attention, as shown by studies (Thorat, 2009), education could be the main vehicle which can provide them ample thrust force to equate with the rest of the population of the country. So, in this way, education becomes more important in the case of Dalits, and universal education is needed for this particular group. Knowing this condition, the state has tried to attain almost universal enrolment for all children, including the Dalit children. Through various schemes and programmes, the government has increased the enrolment of the students in the schools. This can be seen with the gross enrolment ratio (GER) of the country (NEUPA, 2014). The GER is a statistical measure in the field of education by the United Nations (UN). It is an education index to denote the students enrolled in a particular grade to the ratio of number of students who qualify to be in that grade. The current term is defined by the UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) as “the total enrolment within a country in a specific level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population in the official age group corresponding to this level of education”.

Table 1.1. Gross Enrolment Ratios in primary and elementary education and social groups 2000–01 to 2013–14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>All Communities</th>
<th>SCs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I–V Primary</td>
<td>I–VIII Primary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000–01</td>
<td>95.7</td>
<td>81.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001–02</td>
<td>96.3</td>
<td>82.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002–03</td>
<td>95.3</td>
<td>82.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003–04</td>
<td>98.2</td>
<td>84.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004–05</td>
<td>107.8</td>
<td>93.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005–06</td>
<td>109.4</td>
<td>94.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006–07</td>
<td>111.4</td>
<td>97.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007–08</td>
<td>114.0</td>
<td>100.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008–09</td>
<td>114.4</td>
<td>99.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009–10</td>
<td>115.5</td>
<td>102.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010–11</td>
<td>116.0</td>
<td>104.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011–12</td>
<td>108.0</td>
<td>94.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012–13</td>
<td>106.0</td>
<td>97.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013–14</td>
<td>101.4</td>
<td>97.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NEUPA 2014.
The NEUPA data (2014, Table 1.1) shows increase in the GER of the students in the schools in primary (I–V) and elementary (I–VIII) education as compared to the GER of secondary (VIII–X) and higher secondary (X–XII) education. So, when it comes to the enrolment in the primary as well elementary education, near total universalization of school enrolment is reported in the schools. On the other hand, if you see the result of the population which passed that level of education and attained higher education, it is evident they remain deprived. A major portion of the students left their education and stayed away from the education system. That portion comes in the category of dropout population.

Conceptualizing/Re-conceptualizing Dropout

Dropouts refers to that portion of the children who remain left out from the school system. In this way, they have stayed outside the school system education and, in modern day, left behind from the other group children. The literal meaning of dropout is ‘wastage’ and it is used in education as the inhibition of school socialization due to discontinuation of education. This word started in economics and it sees education as an industry in which input are children and output are well-trained citizens having good role for themselves and the country. In this, drop out of children refers to wastage in terms of getting finished product. The more commonly accepted phrase in literature would be ‘failure in schools’ before attaining the end point in educational social system.

In the various literatures, drop out in education is explained and defined in different ways. As per Brimer and Pauli (1971) dropout means:

- **The failure of a system to provide universal education**: The Declaration of the Rights of the Child (1959) includes the child’s right to education and country, and the country which fails to provide education to its total child population is failing in its duty.
- **Failure to recreate children into the system**: The demand for education usually being greater than the supply and the existence of legal prescription of the age at which children should begin school together reduce the incidence of the second source of wastage at first and second levels.
- **Failure to hold children within the system**: Educational system in both its voluntary and compulsory sectors depends on external and internal factors. Social and economic conditions may be such that the school cannot retain children, as it would wish.
- **Failure to set out appropriate objectives**: In dropout education, a system of socialization fails to set out appropriate objectives to achieve the goals of the developments of the country, and even more powerful influence in modern education has been the concept of the nature of childhood itself.
- **Inefficiency in the achievement of objectives**: The existence of individual differences in rate and the kind of learning lead some countries to adopt a different mode of setting objectives, of assessing achievement of them and of an action consequent upon the assessment. Failure of children admits to a part of the system to achieve the standards set for them. However, systems differ in their mode of recognizing the achievement of objectives within established school practices.

Voss, Wendling and Elliott (1966), in their study, point out that in the USA, dropouts do not form a homogeneous group and that it is important to distinguish between early and late school dropouts. They suggest
that pupils with limited ability generally leave school early, whereas ‘capable’ dropouts tend to remain in school longer. According to them, school dropouts are classified into the following three categories:

- Involuntary dropouts: Those who leave school as a consequence of personal crisis.
- Retarded dropouts: Those who lack sufficient ability to handle academic studies and who tend to drop out prior to high school entrance.
- Capable dropouts: Those who terminate their education prior to high school graduation despite the fact that they have the ability to do the required academic work.

A dropout is a pupil of any age who leaves school for any reason other than death, degree graduation or completion of the programme of studies, without transferring to another elementary or secondary school (LeCompte & Dworkin, 1991).

Dropout—whether voluntary or involuntary—is the most convenient event to observe in identifying the failure of system to hold children within it.

Dropout is defined as the following:

1. In simple words, dropout may be defined as a cessation of continuing school education for various reasons other than death of the child.
2. Wastage involves pupils who start school but dropout before they reach a level of sustainable literacy and numeracy (Mehta, 1995).
3. Wastage can be understood as the withdrawal of a student, dropping out degree on completing a given course.
4. Wastage has been defined as the premature withdrawal of the children from school at any stage before the completion of a given course (Lakshmaiah & Jayakumar, 1994, p. 64).
5. A student is identified as a dropout if he or she is absent without an approved excuse or documented transfer and does not return to school by the fall of the following school year, or if he or she completes the school year but fails to remain during the following school year (Government of Karnataka, 2004).
6. Students enrolled as migrants and whose whereabouts are unknown (Government of Karnataka, 2004).
7. Many children leave the schools even before completing the primary education, which means waste of money and energy spent over their primary education. Hartog Committee has called it a waste in its report (Sharma, Ramanath & Sharma, 2004).
8. Dropout means a premature withdrawal of children from school at any stage before the completion of primary course (Sharma, Ramanath & Sharma, 2004).

In the present study, ‘dropout’ means leaving or discontinuing the process of education without completing the full cycle or without attaining the goal. In other words, dropout also implies the children who quit their education/studies before the completion of primary and elementary education in the school system. In a further segment, the study gives a brief overview of the statistical scenario of Dalit children’s school dropout.

**Statistics of Dalit Dropout**

When it comes to the Dalit children dropout, it becomes more pathetic as they are already in a marginalized group having minimum ways to excel in development in future life. As data shows, there are differences in dropout rates of Dalits versus rest of the population in the Indian condition. In this way,
looking for the dropout population of all communities and Dalit children in the country from 1980 to
2008–2009, a revealing trend can be seen (NEUPA, 2014, Table 1.2, Table 1.3; Thorat, 2009). There is
high dropout rate in Dalit children in the primary as well as elementary education system as compared to
rest of the groups. Although there is decrease in rates of dropout in both the groups (all communities
and Dalit population), still, when it comes to group-wise data, the lowering of dropout rate in Dalit
children is less as compared to other population groups in the same year. Hence, from the above data,
it is evident that although the GER is high among the Indian children through various schemes and
programmes run by the government, the disparity of the Dalit children still prevails when it comes to
school dropout rates. To understand this disparity in the dropout, instead of universal enrolment ratio, we
have to think from all perspectives. Although there are several studies concerning dropouts in the whole
society, limited literature relating to dropout of specific groups in society can be found.

**Understanding Children Dropout**

Dropping out is a pathological and individual problem. Understanding dropout is a complex phenome-
non. Student dropout illustrates the unseen marginal voice of an individual within the social system
(Dei, 1997). Yet, defining the causes of dropping out is extremely difficult. Dropout is impacted by
various factors such as frustration/self-esteem, educational achievement, performance, participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>All Communities</th>
<th>SCs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I–V Primary</td>
<td>I–V Primary</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I–V VIII Elementary</td>
<td>I–V VIII Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980–81</td>
<td>58.7</td>
<td>72.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985–86</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>64.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990–91</td>
<td>42.6</td>
<td>60.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995–96</td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td>58.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000–01</td>
<td>40.7</td>
<td>53.7</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>All Communities</th>
<th>SCs</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Years</td>
<td>I–V Primary</td>
<td>I–V Primary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I–V VIII Elementary</td>
<td>I–V VIII Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001–02</td>
<td>39.0</td>
<td>54.6</td>
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<td>2002–03</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>52.8</td>
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<td>2003–04</td>
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<td>2004–05</td>
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<tr>
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<td>24.9</td>
<td>42.3</td>
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</table>

Source: NEUPA 2014.
and acceptability of the individual in an education system (see Table 1.4). The factors can be understood through several models. Earlier, Finn’s (1998) model of frustration/self-esteem tried to understand dropout through the lower self. This model argues that the student who does not do well becomes frustrated and it leads to lower educational achievement and low self-image, resulting in dropout. Another model to understand dropout is the participation identification model (Finn, 1989; Lehr, Hansen, Sinclair et al., 2003). It postulates that individual involvement in participation induce lack of identification. This model emphasizes the importance of likelihoods of individual behaviour. Finn (1989) argues that dropout is due to the alienation of individual from the school as a social system as a whole, whereas De Jung and Duckworth (1986) and Weitzman, Klerman, Lamb, et al. (1985), in this vein, reveal the reason of dropout from the association of high absenteeism with poor school work. Some scholars (Lloyd, 1978; Rumberger, 1987) correlate absenteeism and disruptive behaviour for disengagement of an individual from school. They reveal that the correlation between these lead to individual dropout. Apart from these, the deviance theory of dropping out by LeCompte and Dworkin (1991) tries to understand dropout through social action and refers to the student who drops out as non-conformist. Most of the research studied dropout problem without knowing the position of the student. Dropout student is an actor before his or her dispossession from the system. So, dropout is a kind of individual disengagement from the education system in which school also has a role. In this way, it is perceivable that school as a sociological organizational set-up plays a predominant role while looking at Dalit children dropout.

### Conceptualizing/Re-conceptualizing School as a Factor for Dropout

School is not only an organizational set-up. Observing school as an educational social system, (Ballantine, Jeanne & Spade, 2012) argue that school, as an education system, falls into two main areas: process and structure. Horton and Hunt, in their book *Sociology*, argue that school not only consists of administration, teachers and student of different culture, but it also is a social system in which an established series of relations determine what will happen (2004, p. 296). School is material structural in nature, and it has political socio-cultural dynamics. Therefore, school is a part of a social ecology of learning. So, dropout is a kind of dialectics. It is because school, in all aspects, work for bourgeois interest. It is an instrument within the social system where textbooks are used to serve the purposes of bourgeois spirit. It is because the school works for legitimacy of status quo means to maintain the order of existing social equilibrium. (Barton et al., 2012) argue that school represents the purest form of ideological statement of the ruling class, whereas (Ballantine, Jeanne & Spade, 2012) add further by mentioning Weber and other social theorists. They argue that schools teach to maintain status quo.

### Table 1.4. Major and minor Reason for School Drop Out among the Primary and Elementary (3–14 age group) in Rural Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal / Major Reason</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(i) Children not interested in study</td>
<td>37.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) Children unable to cope of the school study</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii) Parents of the child not interested for continuing study</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iv) Financial constrains</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minor Reason</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(i) Economic activities</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) Assistance given by child for domestic purposes</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii) Started work for wages and salaries</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total** 100%

*Source: Jayachandran (2007) work based on analysis on 52 Round NSS data.*
Dei (2005), in his study of inclusive schooling in case of Ghana schools, argues how school is an agent for children inclusion. He mentions that school is a centre of an individual’s lived-in experience. He examines school as a social system of inclusive socialization. He observes that school gives an opportunity to students to connect with individual social environment, culture, population and history. He also developed a critical anti-colonial discursive framework to examine the webs of social relations that were based on key themes of domination, subordination and resistance. Rumberger (2011) refers to school as a contextual factor. It is because schools have an impact on children, socialization and achievement. He talks about four characteristics of schools that influence school performance that induce dropout. Firstly, he maintains that school composition is one part of the school, particularly the socio-economic composition of the student body. Secondly, he talks about the structural characteristic of the school such as size, location, school control mechanism and public tradition. Thirdly, he talks about the policies and practice such as academic and social climate. After talking about the characteristics of the school, he goes further and mentions that school characteristics as a whole influence the dropout behaviour in two ways. The first way is indirect and the other is direct. Indirect way refers to created conditions that influence the student engagement, for example, lack of engagement is due to student boredom, poor attendance and lack of self-image. The direct way refers to policy and conscious decisions by the school that result in dropout. It includes the laws, grade system, misbehaviour and other such reasons. However, it is a fact that besides the school context, family, peer groups, communities and other cultural settings also determine dropout trends. In this manner, we would try to identify some of the reasons of school dropout in the next few paragraphs which will summarize the reasons for dropout and textbook culture as a factor for ‘failure in school system’.

**Reason for Dropout**

There are various reasons given for stopping the continuation of education in the school system. As per Weber (1989) and Rumberger (1983, 1987, 2011), among the reasons for dropout three broad categories may be identified, such as (a) family-related reasons, (b) school-related reasons and (c) personal reasons. In family-related reasons come the issues of family such as socio-economic status, disadvantage group, parental education or single parent families. Coming to the school-related reasons, they are linked to matters such as attendance, grades, marks, academic achievement, school curriculum, interest in school and school work. Personal reasons consist of disciplinary problems, personal issues such as marriage, psychological disorder, and so on. In the study of Jayachandran (2007), which was based on analysis on 52 Round NSS data, results found were classified into two broad categories such as principal reasons and minor reasons in the school child of primary and elementary of the rural areas. In this, among the major or principal reasons, further categories are identified as (a) not interested in study (37.2 per cent), (b) unable to cope with the school study (16.4 per cent), (c) parents of the child not interested for various reasons (12.5 per cent) and (d) financial constraints (11.2 per cent). The minor reason includes child involvement in (a) economic activities (6.1 per cent), (b) assistance given for domestic purposes (3.7 per cent) and (c) started work for wages and salaries (2.5 per cent).

Among the main reasons of all the children, the items which are grouped in major categories are the family- and school-related problems. Here comes the picture of family, culture and their historical marginalization in the case of Dalit education. The noted educationist, Krishna Kumar focused on textbook culture as the main factor responsible for the dropout of children from the education system (1985, 1991).
Textbook Culture

Textbook is a physical as well as ideological component of the education system. Krishna Kumar (1985) aptly mentions that textbook is the sole teaching instrument in the school. It is found in our study that there is contrast between the dropout children’s lives and the world that is portrayed in their textbooks. Textbooks inhibit the active participation of the peripheral student. Lack of participation induces low self-image that results in disengagement of children from the school. Therefore, a decentralized process of curricular centre formation needs to be accomplished. In India, education system is decentralized in nature. Education is both a state and central subject. However, it is needed to work further; mainly curricular content should be developed with cognized belief of micro communities. Government should develop a way by which the collaboration between central text and peripheral community belief could be implemented through the textbooks. One particular tradition in school curricular should not be promoted. State and other educational bodies should also recruit and provide appropriate training to teachers to teach the peripheral heritage and history.

School, as a part of the social system, validates and legitimizes the social world. The social world itself is based on the concept of binary opposition of centre and periphery. Periphery and centre as factors have been largely developed in the education system by the bourgeoisie from time to time to maintain the unequal status equilibrium and curricular. Nielsen (2014), in his famous book, talks about the two factors which determine the school education system. They include indigenous structure of social stratification that was operated through the five-tier caste hierarchy framework. The other factor is modern education system that is the result of colonial rule. British colonial system strengthened the myth and narratives, and consciously used pre-indigenous knowledge for the benefit of the British Raj. To take the words of Kaur (1985), Indian education system was based on British Eurocentric Curricular. The continuation of modern education system as well as the absorption of centre fully disregards the peripheral interest that had become a major reason for dropout. The absence of historical narrative and peripheral common history has resulted in neglect and disinterest among the children of this specific community. So, our study recommends that it is necessary to bring the peripheral history (history of commons) in a curricular to address the historical injustice. From time immemorial, the Indian state has neglected the indigenous system of education. Hence, the time has come that the state should promote the education that fulfils the special kind of need of the special communities.

Conclusion

Education, as a part of the human ecological system, helps to meet caste inequality by acknowledging difference. Through transformative change in pedagogy, existing curricular and mainstream narratives, the problem of disengagement and alienation of the student can be addressed. In any education system, official curriculum creates and transmits the knowledge which serves the norms and order of the society. To achieve real democracy, equality and participation of all sections of the society is needed, and education system needs be democratized. The system should be democratized not only in article, but the ideological apparatus that helps the system to function also needs to be revised to meet the challenges of equitable education. State, along with the policy-maker, should promote democratic participation of all sections of the society in developing curricular and pedagogy to provide lasting solution to the problem of dropout. To pursue equity, social justice and freedom, the state should respond in this regard. Dei (1997) explores school as a site of multiple oppression and domination. School is a platform for diverse populations for their socialization. School, as an institution, provides the environment that is
necessary for the reproduction of social relations. It is done only when cultural politics is avoided. This article emphasizes that children of the marginal group of society generally dropping out is because they fail to acquire the requisite cultural capital. Bourdieu and Passeron (1991) argue that the school serves as a mirror, and society, as an institution, has a characteristic that maintains the interest of the bourgeois. If we observe school as an institution, it can be said that school functions or confirms the interest of the dominant class and value, as Althusser used to call it, an ideological state apparatus (Althusser, 2014). Our study found that in the time of making curricular, the cultural content of the peripheral community should be encompassed so as to include the Little Tradition, particularly the oral and folk tradition, of a peripheral community.

Notes
1. ‘Fifth Varna’ after four Varna system—Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra. For details on the Varna system and purity and pollution in caste system, see Dumont (1980).
2. In this British Bengal Provinces suggest the term for Indian Franchise Committee to locate different communities which need special provision for the representation in the power system of India named for election of their representative (Thorat, 2009).
3. For details, see the Government of India Act of 1935.
4. As discussed above, we used ‘failure in school’ as school ‘dropout’.
References


OH: Centre on Education and Training for Employment.


