

Awareness of Scholarship Schemes among Various Socio-Economic Groups: A Study of Haryana

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Abstract:

Higher education is the main backbone of economic development and modern society. It has the power to transform human beings into human resources. In India, increasing attention has been given for the development of higher education both by the government and private sector. Today the country has one of the largest higher education systems in the world in terms of institutions and second largest in terms of enrolments. But, due to their weaker socio-economic status and poor financial conditions, some of the deserving candidates are unable to complete their higher education. Accessibility may be increased by providing financial assistance to poor and socially deprived section of the society. Despite a number of scholarship and fellowship schemes, GER, in higher education, in India as well as in Haryana is low and particularly among SCs and lower class people. The reason may be people are not aware about the Scholarship schemes. So this paper makes an attempt to measure the awareness of scholarship schemes in Haryana. The study is based on primary data collected by the questionnaire. To analyze the data descriptive statistics has been used. To see the association between variables chi square statistics test has been used. The study found the awareness level regarding scholarship schemes in Haryana was very low and awareness level is not affected by socio-economic variables.

Key Words: Higher Education, Accessibility, Gross Enrolment Ratio,

Introduction:

Higher education is important for the country, as it is a powerful tool to build knowledge based society of the 21st century (AISHE, 2011-12). Higher education plays a vital role in facilitating these changes by incorporating all of the various demographics of the population (Joshi and Ahir, 2013). Indeed, higher education is the principal site at which our national goals, development priorities and civic values can be examined and refined (Twelfth Five Year Plan, 2012-2017). Further, it is also considered to be one of the most potent means of achieving sustainable development. It is accepted that without higher education, developing countries could not get benefit from global knowledge-based economy (World Bank, 2000).

In India, increasing attention has been given for the development of higher education both by the government and private sector. Today the country has one of the largest higher education system in the world in terms of institutions and second largest in terms of enrolments (Ernst & Young, 2012). But, due to their weaker socio-economic status and poor financial conditions, some of the deserving candidates are unable to complete their higher studies. In 2016-17, the GER (Gross Enrolment Rate) is 25.2 per cent at overall levels, the GER among the SC's (21.1 per cent) and the ST's (15.4 per cent). In 2016-17, GER in Haryana is 29% at overall level which is high above the national average. However, for the same time period GER in Haryana for SCs is 18.3%, which is very low and also below the national average. Thus GER for the SC/ST is lower as compared to overall level. Moreover, GER in India is increasing from last few years yet it is very low compared to other countries. In 2015 GER in India was 26.87 % which was much below from other countries such as 43.39 % of China, 48.86% of Thailand and 85.80 % of USA (AISHE 2016-17).

Accessibility may be increased by providing financial assistance to poor and socially deprived section of the society. Government is increasingly considering that equity and social justice can be ensured well through direct scholarship and grants (Punnayya Committee, 1993). Scholarships have great potential for promoting equity in higher education, as large proportion of scholarships are meant especially for weaker sections of the society (CABE, 2005). Govt. of India (Department of Education) and Haryana Govt. administer and finance a number of scholarship and fellowship schemes meant for students for further studies and research in different universities and institutions in India and abroad. Yet GER in Haryana in higher

education is low among SCs and lower class people. It has also been observed that budget allocated by Haryana Govt. to various scholarship schemes is not fully utilized. The reason may be people are not aware about the Scholarship schemes.

In the present paper I want to study the awareness regarding scholarship schemes among various socio- economic groups. Various research works has been done on accessibility of higher education by various socio- economic groups and utilization of scholarship schemes. Some of the studies are reviewed here.

Review of Literature:

Shah, (1964), in his study “The social background of the college students in Gujarat”, finds out that the three upper castes of Banias, Brahmins and Patidar represented 88 % of the total students’ sample, 5% were constituted of intermediate caste and lower caste constituted only 7%. Less participation of lower caste was mainly due to two factors; poverty and lack of tradition of literacy among the lower caste people. The study, however, points out that people of these lower castes awakening gradually and participating in higher education. But most of the students from these lower castes have been able to participate in higher education with the help of financial assistance. And this financial assistance is provided by various support groups within the caste, by charitable resources or from the government schemes of scholarships. The study also finds out that urban residents have easier access to higher education than rural residents in Gujarat.

Sharma, (1975) made a study on, “Equalization and Utilization of educational opportunity with special reference to the Muslim in Delhi”. The main objectives of the research was to study the tendency of proportional share of educational opportunities for Muslims and non-Muslims and to study whether the comparative backwardness of Muslims in economic, social and cultural fields is responsible for their lesser utilization of educational opportunities. The study found that Muslim community was far behind in the field of education as compared to others, and some of the factors which are responsible of the backwardness of community in education were non-availability of religious education, inadequate provision of Urdu medium schools and scarcity of Urdu medium books. The study found no significant difference in the socio-economic status of non-Muslim and Muslims.

Lakshmana, (1975), in his study “ scheduled caste and scheduled Tribe High School students in Andhra Pradesh” made an attempt to study the conditions of scheduled casts and scheduled

tribe students and to find out the extent to which the facilities provided for them had benefited them. The study revealed that 65 teachers felt scholarship and free ship were essential and were being utilized properly, 93 felt though they were essential but were not utilized properly. The study found that 286 students felt the scholarship schemes were useful but 82.25 percent felt these schemes were inadequate. 242 scheduled caste students were financially supported by parents, 184 depended on some sort of scholarship and 29 in private management schools admitted that they did not receive the entire scholarship. The study concluded that scholarship schemes were not utilized properly.

Behera, (2015) examined the access to higher education for tribal in India. The study also analyzed various determinants of participation in higher education among tribes. The research was based on secondary data. The study used the data collected by National Sample Survey Organization. The study revealed that tribal students have very low participation in higher education. The study reviewed the schemes and programs launched by government of India to increase the participation of deprived classes in higher education. The study found that despite the various schemes the country has unequal representation of tribal students. The study concluded that Government should take some drastic steps to the development of tribal population. By changing attitude of parents through counseling and providing social security to tribal girls, participation in higher education of tribal can be increased in India.

Mitra, (2015) made an attempt to build an empirical ground for promoting the increased role of public funding in higher education. Various measures like per capita public expenditure and proportion of GSDP spent on higher education have been calculated. The data was taken for the period 1990-91 to 2009-10 using constant price of year 2004-05. The study was done at an all India level and also across the 15 major states. To assess whether the distribution of subsidies is progressive, tool of benefit incidence analysis has been used. The study found that the distribution of subsidies is pro/rich, and high levels of inequality in Gujarat and Haryana. Relatively equal distribution has been found in Orissa and Uttar Pradesh. The study argued that though subsidies is regressive in high level of education subsidies should not reduced at this level because there is already low participation from lower income group and if subsidies is reduced their participation will be reduce further. To increase the participation of students from

lower income group in higher education public funding should be encouraged. Moreover alternative strategies like differentiated fee structure could be adopted to make funding of higher education sustainable.

It can be inferred from the result of above mentioned studies that there is disparity in access to higher education among various socio- economic groups. The students from underprivileged class of society are not accessing higher education to the same extent. Though there are many scholarship and subsidy schemes for backward castes, scheduled caste and scheduled tribes are available sufficiently, even then people from these sections are not coming to acquire higher education. One of the reasons may be lack of awareness among these classes regarding availability of such schemes. So it is pertinent to see how far students are aware regarding the scholarship schemes.

Objectives:

- 1 To identify the awareness level regarding various scholarship schemes in Haryana State.
2. To measure the association between awareness regarding schemes and socio-economic group.

Hypotheses:

- H₀₁ There is no significant relation between awareness regarding scholarship and gender
- H₀₂ There is no significant relation between awareness regarding scholarship and residence
- H₀₃ There is no significant relation between awareness regarding scholarship and category
- H₀₄ There is no significant relation between awareness regarding scholarship and Income

Research Methodology:**Sampling Technique and Data Collection: -**

Stratified sampling method is used in the study. According to literacy rate (Census of India, 2011) four districts of Haryana were selected. Rohtak and Rewari were selected from higher literacy rate districts and Sirsa and Jind were selected from lower literacy rate districts. Sample size consists of 300 respondents. 75 respondents from each district, who were accessing higher

education, were selected randomly. The study is based on primary data. A questionnaire was designed to collect the data.

Specification of Variables:

In the present study socio- economic variables gender, Residence, Category and income level are independent variables and Awareness regarding scholarship is dependent variable. The objective of the study is to find out the effect of these socio-economic variables on awareness regarding scholarship schemes.

Tools and Techniques of data analysis: To analyze the data, descriptive statistics have been used. Row and column percentage has been calculated. To see the association between variables chi square statistics test has been used. Cramer's v has been used to check the strength of association.

Result and Discussion:

Respondents from 4 districts of Haryana were asked about their awareness regarding various scholarship and financial assistance provided by govt. and various private institutes. Out of 300 respondents' total 110 respondents responded positively about their awareness. So the study found that 36.7 % was aware about the various scholarship schemes for higher education.

Awareness regarding Scholarship Schemes and Socio- Economic Group- After getting responses about awareness regarding scholarship schemes the interest of the study is to know the relationship between awareness regarding schemes and socio-economic status. For this purpose null hypotheses were tested using chi-square test.

Awareness and Gender-

The study found that female respondents are more aware regarding scholarship schemes for higher education than male respondents. As shown in the table (1.1) 40.3% female respondents and 30.7% male respondents were aware about scholarship schemes for higher education. it shows that female are more aware about scholarship schemes as comparative to males. But chi square test statistic of 2.817 (.093) indicates that there is no significant association between gender and awareness regarding scholarship. so the null hypothesis is accepted at 5% level of significance. But p value also shows that association is significant at 10 percent level of significance.

Table1.1: Scholarship Awareness and Gender

Gender	Scholarship Awareness			Chi-square statistics
	No	Yes	Total	
Female	111 (59.7%)	75 (40.3%)	186 (100%)	2.817 (.093)
Male	79 (69.3%)	35 (30.7%)	114 (100%)	
Total	190 (63.3%)	110 (36.7%)	300 (100%)	

Awareness and Category :

The study found that SC category respondents are more aware regarding scholarship schemes for higher education than other category respondents. As shown in the table (1.2) 73.3% respondents of SC category, 44.4% respondents of BC category, 27.6% respondents of general category and 25% respondents of OBC category were aware about scholarship schemes for higher education. The data shows that there is association between category and awareness about scholarship schemes.

Table1.2: Scholarship Awareness and Category

Category	Scholarship Awareness			Chi-square statistics
	No	Yes	Total	
BC	25 (55.6%)	20 (44.4%)	45 (100%)	35.513 (.001)
Gen	126 (72.4%)	48 (27.6%)	174 (100%)	
OBC	27 (75%)	9 (25%)	36 (100%)	
SC	12 (26.7%)	33 (73.3%)	45 (100%)	
Total	190 (63.3%)	110 (36.7%)	300 (100%)	

And chi square test statistic of 35.513 (.001) also indicates that there is significant association between category and awareness regarding scholarship. So the null hypothesis is rejected at 5% level of significance. To find out the strength of the association cramer's v value is calculated. Cramer's v is .344 (.001) that indicates the low association between the variables.

Awareness and Residence:

The study found that rural respondents are more aware regarding scholarship schemes for higher education than urban respondents. As shown in the table (1.3) 39.8% rural respondents and 31.9% urban respondents were aware about scholarship schemes for higher education. the result shows that rural people are more aware than urban people. But chi square test statistic of 1.903 (.168) indicates that there is no significant association between residence and awareness regarding scholarship. So the null hypothesis is accepted at 5% level of significance.

Table1.3: Scholarship Awareness and Residence

Residence	Scholarship Awareness			Chi-square statistics
	No	Yes	Total	
Rural	109 (60.2%)	72 (39.8%)	181 (100%)	1.903 (.168)
Urban	81 (68.1%)	38 (31.9%)	119 (100%)	
Total	190 (63.3%)	110 (36.7%)	300 (100%)	

Awareness and Income level:

The study found that respondents from low income family are more aware regarding scholarship schemes for higher education than respondents from high income family. As shown in the table(1.4) 47.1% respondents from low income family, 42.9% respondents from very low income family, 31.3% respondents from middle income family and 28.9% respondents from high income family were aware about scholarship schemes for higher education. The data shows that low income people are more aware about scholarship schemes. But chi square test statistic of 8.613 (.072) indicates that there is no significant association between income level and awareness regarding scholarship. So the null hypothesis is accepted at 5% level of significance.

Table1.4: Scholarship Awareness and Income Level

Income Level	Scholarship Awareness			Chi-square statistics
	No	Yes	Total	
Below 5000	32 (57.1%)	24 (42.9%)	56 (100%)	

5000-10000	36 (52.9%)	32 (47.1%)	68 (100%)	8.613 (.072)
10000-25000	57 (68.7%)	26 (31.3%)	83 (100%)	
25000 or above	64 (71.1%)	26 (28.9%)	90 (100%)	
Nil	1 (33.3%)	2 (66.7%)	3 (100%)	
Total	190 (63.3%)	110 (36.7%)	300 (100%)	

Conclusion:

The present study found that awareness level regarding scholarship schemes in Haryana is very low and it is not affected by socio economic variables. As the previous studies reviewed above indicate, the facilities of higher education are availed of mainly by the urban, rich class and upper section of the society. Thus the rural, lower class, scheduled castes, schedule tribes and other backward communities are not accessing higher education to the same extent. It is also important that despite subsidizing higher education, providing various scholarship schemes for poor, meritorious and lower caste people there accessibility in higher education is very low. One important reason may be that they are not aware about scholarship schemes provided by government. The present study shows that only 36.7% students were aware about the schemes of scholarship, which is very low. The present study support the study of Behra which found that scholarship funds are not fully utilized and also the study of Mitra which found that utilization of public funds in higher education is pro--rich. The one reason behind all these is lack of awareness regarding scholarship schemes among various socio-economic groups. Therefore it would be helpful to increase awareness among people regarding financial assistances facilities available for higher education so that people from the underprivileged class could continue to acquire higher level of education.

Limitations and suggestion for further research:

This study is limited to only four districts and sample size is a small proportion of total population. To overcome these limitations it is suggested that a large sample from more districts be examined.

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