

**Higher Education in Kerala: How Inclusive is it to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes?**

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Education is a very important determinant of employment, income and mobility of the people. This is all the more so in a knowledge driven economy and society. An inclusive educational system with access to students from different socio-economic backgrounds is necessary to tap the diversity of their talents and creativity. Inclusive society with equal opportunities to all is essential for social and economic mobility so vital for a stable society. More importantly, equal access to education, is increasingly viewed as a basic duty of a progressive government and mature society.

Including the scheduled castes (Dalits) and scheduled tribes (Adivasis) in the educational development is important as they constitute a sizable segment of the population of the country (SCs - 16.2 per cent and STs - 8.2 per cent). These communities in Kerala constitute a significant segment of state's population though their share is lower in Kerala population (9.8 per cent and 1.1 per cent). In allowing these communities to participate in the human development and through that in economic development, the country is only correcting a historical injustice. Including these social groups in the human capital formation is particularly important as their access to land and capital including social capital is limited. In Kerala, the average land holdings of SCs was only 0.08 hectares (ha) as against 0.19ha for OBCs and 0.34 ha for others. The average land holding of STs was slightly more (0.25 ha). It is in this context that this paper attempts to examine some of the exclusionary trends in education, particularly higher education.

This paper is divided into three parts. Part I examines the trends in Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of different social groups (SCs, STs and Others) in post higher secondary education between 1993-94, 1999-2000 and 2004-05. It also marshals scattered data and information from different sources to find out where exactly, within post higher secondary education that exclusion takes place. Part II examines

the financial reasons for exclusion. In this context it examines the increasing private costs of education, the expansion of self financing education sector and the state's steady withdrawal from financing education. Part III examines the socio-political developments in Kerala that has enabled the reduction in the state's commitment in education leading to exclusionary trends.

## **PART I**

### **Educational Disparities of SC and ST Groups**

The literacy rates for SC and ST population, though lower than those of the general population in the state, are higher than even the literacy rates for the general population in India. SC students constitute 10.7 per cent and ST students 1.2 per cent of the total enrolment in schools. Their share in enrolment is commensurate with their share in the school going age group population (10.4 per cent for SCs and 1.2 per cent for STs) (George & Kumar, 2009). Though Kerala's performance compares well with those of other states and other developing countries, the disparities still persist among the social groups both in terms of quantitative and qualitative indicators. Besides, the disparities increase at higher and higher levels of education, particularly in technical and professional education which provide better access to more remunerative jobs. In a way, it is these disparities within the state that matter more in view of the high unemployment rate in the state and consequently the highly competitive nature of the labour market.

Besides, most of the increase in employment in the county and the state is taking place in the private sector rather than in the public sector. In such a context, job reservation for SCs and STs in public sector becomes less relevant today in accessing jobs by them. Access to job market abroad is also limited due to the high costs for availing jobs and their lack of social network.

Table one gives the Gross Enrolment Rates (GER) for different social groups in the post higher secondary education in Kerala. Though the SCs have improved their GER steadily between 1993 -94 and 2004-05, there is still large disparities between SCs and other social groups (Dubey 2008). In 2004-05, the GER of SCs was only 16.7 percent as against 26.3 percent for non-SC/ST groups. The GER figures for STs are problematic as the sample size of STs is either not available or is too small.

Though the increase in GER is quite impressive the figures camouflage many vital aspects. The increase in GER took place more in the traditional arts and science courses rather than in the job oriented technical and professional courses. Table two shows the steep increase in the share of SC and ST students in the total strength of students in arts and science colleges at both under graduate (UG) and post graduate (PG) levels. The share of SCs at the UG level almost doubled between 1994 and 2008. At the PG level also, there was increase though marginal. In the case of STs, their share at the UG level increased from 0.4 per cent in 1994 to 1.4 per cent in 2008. The share in PG courses doubled.

Table three gives the course- wise share of SC and ST students in total enrolment in arts and science colleges in 2005-06 and 2008-09. The Table shows quite an impressive share of these social groups in all courses. The share in arts subjects was more than in science subjects both at the UG and PG levels. At the PG level, there was less representation than at the UG level both in arts and science courses.

One of the recent trends in Kerala's education system is the starting of a number of self-financing courses in the government owned and government aided colleges. Besides, number of courses were started in the newly established unaided arts and science colleges. These courses were mostly job oriented and were started avowedly to meet the emerging demands of the job market. A

sample study of the changing profile of the students in the regular and self-financing courses in arts and sciences both in the aided and unaided colleges is given in Table four. The Table shows that the share of SCs and STs in the self-financing stream was considerably lower than in the regular aided streams. What is more, their share has been coming down both at the UG and PG level (Zachariah 2010).

Table five gives the share of SC and ST students in the total number of students in polytechnics offering technical courses considered to be more job oriented than the regular arts and science courses. The share of SCs in the total number of students in polytechnics was much lower than their share in arts and science colleges. In fact, the share of SCs had come down, though marginally. The share of STs increased marginally during the last five years.

Table six gives the number of institutions in the higher and technical education as also the number of SC and ST students enrolled therein (we have no data readily available on the total strength of students in these colleges). The data gives some indication that the number of SC and ST students are disproportionately low in engineering and medical colleges including Ayurveda colleges. In fact, there was no representation for STs in Ayurveda, dental, nursing and pharmacy colleges. Part of the reason, as will be argued later, is in the larger increase in the number of self-financing colleges than government owned and aided colleges where the fees are highly subsidised.

### **Lower Educational Achievements of SC and ST students**

Several micro-level studies indicate that the situation revealed by the increasing GER in higher education is not as rosy as suggested by the aggregate statistics given in Table one. These studies reveal that the aggregate statistics camouflage some of the major differences in the educational achievements of students belonging to different socio-economic groups. The quality of education imbibed

by the SC and ST students in schools seems to be poor. As may be seen from Table seven the percentage of pass in the matriculation examination was the lowest for STs followed by the SCs.

Table eight, which gives the performance of students in higher secondary examination also shows the same trends. The pass percentage of ST students was the lowest (64.8 %) followed by SC students (68.5%). These pass percentages were much lower than those of others (85.2).

The quality of school education and the coaching classes attended is reflected in the entrance examination for professional courses in Kerala. A study by Rajasenan et.al (2010) found that SC and ST population did not have any presence among the first 101 ranks in the engineering entrance examination. As the authors explain, under representation of reserved candidates in the best ranks is not issues as far as admission to these courses are concerned because allotment to colleges is done with separate lists for reservation categories. For example, if an SC student who secured 714<sup>th</sup> rank in the Common Entrance Test (CEE) is the first among the SCs, he/she will be given a chance to choose the best engineering college in the state, despite his low overall rank in CEE. But, if this relatively low rank holder opts for say, College of Engineering, Thiruvananthapuram, which the most meritorious students opt for he/she has to compete with the top students who secured the best ranks in CEE. The competition can get really tough and may result in unintended harmful consequences.

A micro level study on wastage in engineering education in Kerala expresses the grave concern whether, the SC and ST students with lower ranks by getting admission in better colleges along with higher ranking students are really being helped. It was found that only about half the number of SC and ST students who got the benefit of admission under the reservation system actually managed to

pass the course. It also found that the proportion of incompletes (and wastage) is much higher among the students getting admission through reservation quota as compared to the 'open quota' entrants (Sivasankaran and Babu 2008). The authors of the study suggest that other measures are required to ensure equal opportunity and justice to them. Two box items in the study titled "Drifting into Depression and Best Thing that Happened to Me was being Thrown out" are given in the appendix.

## PART II

Exclusionary trends in education particularly in higher education and professional education are the result of not only factors like increase in private costs to be incurred by students, growth of self-financing or student financed institutions, the poor quality of education in government and aided schools but also due to strengthening of non financial entry barriers and inadequate attention to the problems of disadvantaged groups.

### **Increasing Private Costs of Education**

Though no fee is charged on the SC and ST students, it is not totally free for them as they have to incur costs of several types (special fees, examination fees, cost of reading and writing materials, clothing, travelling, study tours, donation to Parent Teacher Association, private tuition etc). To a large extent, the different types of financial assistance by the government meet these costs. As will be argued later, the quantum of assistance becomes inadequate for meeting the total expenses in the professional courses. According to the India Human Development Survey (2005), the annual total private expenses of children aged 6-14 in government schools in Kerala was more than twice (Rs. 1537) the all India average (Rs. 688) in 2004-05. The private cost in private schools in Kerala (Rs. 3259) was much higher than the all India average of Rs. 2920.

Data brought out by the 61<sup>st</sup> round of National Sample Survey 2004-05 points out that the proportion of households spending on private tuition/coaching is much higher in rural Kerala than in rural India (17% in rural Kerala and 8% in rural India). However, this proportion is higher even in urban Kerala though only marginally (17% in urban Kerala and 16% in urban India).



A study (Nair 2004) on the household costs of school education in Kerala has shown that the percentage of students receiving private tuition ranged from 6.7 per cent in the pre-primary schools to 34.1 per cent in high schools. These ratios were 11.8 per cent for lower primary schools, 21.5 per cent for upper primary schools and 29.6 per cent for higher secondary schools.

Study on medical education by Ajith Kumar (2010) though it covered only students in the government medical colleges found that about 90 per cent of the cost of education incurred by the students, is on non-fee expenses. The share of all academic expenses is only 27 percent in the case of students staying in hostels or lodges and 40 per cent in the case of day scholars. The educational assistance given by way of lump sum grants, stipend and scholarships to SC/ST students are inadequate to cover fully these private costs especially in medical and engineering colleges.

Table nine gives the Monthly Per Capita Consumption Expenditure (MPCE) on education in Kerala and India according to the National Sample Survey 2004-05. The Table shows that the MPCE on education in rural Kerala was more than double that of rural India. This was true in all MPCE classes except the highest class of Rs.1155 and above. However the MPCE in urban Kerala was lower than that of the country.

We do not have data on MPCE on education separately for different social groups. An indirect indication is available from the MPCE of non-food items given in the NSS survey. Table ten gives the MPCE of food, non-food and total expenditure for different social groups in rural and urban areas. The table shows that the variation in non-food expenditure was more than in expenditure on food among social groups. The Table brings out that in rural areas, the MPCE of STs was the lowest followed by SCs, OBCs and others. In the urban areas, the STs scored better than the SCs and even the OBCs. But they lagged behind 'others'

marginally in the case of food expenditure and substantially in the case of non-food expenditure. The better score of the STs in urban areas have to be interpreted with caution as the sample size of STs in Kerala is small.

The inadequate capacity of the SC and ST groups to finance the increasing educational expenditure is born out by Table eleven which gives the share of population below poverty line in different social groups. In rural areas, percentage of poor in the population was the highest among STs followed by SCs and the OBCs. The forward castes and communities have the least share of poor among them. The same is more or less true among the urban poor except that the SCs have bigger concentration of poor than the STs.

### **Proliferation of Self-financing Institutions**

As seen earlier, a major trend from the nineties aggravating exclusionary trends is the proliferation of unaided schools and the growth of self-financing courses and institutions in the higher education and technical education sectors. These institutions try to recover the entire capital and recurring costs from the students as they are considered to be the sole beneficiaries of education. Many of the new breed of educational entrepreneurs is guided largely by commercial or other extraneous considerations. Even the religious and the caste groups which used to finance education partly out of their own resources, are now choosing the easier option of student-financing for promoting education. The universities and some of the government agencies<sup>1</sup>and cooperatives floated at the initiative of the

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<sup>1</sup> The main agencies in the government's self financing sector are the Institute of Human Resource Development (IHRD) and LBS Centre for Science and Technology. Some of the other government agencies include Kerala State Road Transport Corporation and the Centre for Continuing Education. The government also promoted the formation of student-funded professional colleges in the cooperative sector.

government are now starting only self-financing colleges. Most of the job oriented courses like nursing, medical, engineering, management are now in the self-financing sector (See Table twelve). More than 80 per cent of the engineering colleges, nursing colleges, and pharmacy colleges are in the self-financing stream. More than three-fifths of the institutions offering medical courses in different streams such as Allopathy and Ayurveda are also self - financing in nature.

The private aided colleges, which dominated the arts and science college sector contributing to more than three-fourths of the number of colleges in 1991, have now a share of only 48 per cent. Their expansion is now mostly in the self financing mode. In 2008-09, the self financing arts and science colleges formed 40 percent of the total number of arts and science colleges in the state. As seen earlier, most of the newly started 'job-oriented' courses in arts and science colleges are now conducted on self-financing basis, either in the newly started unaided institutions or in the existing aided colleges themselves.

The SC/ST students are finding it difficult to get educated in the unaided institutions at all levels. Table thirteen gives the share of SC/ST students in schools under different managements. As may be seen from the Table, the SC students constituted only 3.6 per cent of the total students in unaided schools as against 10.6 per cent in aided schools and 13.7 per cent in government schools. The corresponding shares for ST students were 0.3 per cent, 1.3 per cent and 3.1 per cent respectively.

The Industrial Training Centres (ITCs) in the unaided private sector far exceeded the number of government owned Industrial Training Institutes. Table fourteen shows that the share of SCs and STs in Industrial Training Centres (ITC) run mostly without aid from the government is much lower than in the government owned Industrial Training Institutes (ITI).

## **Under Investment of State in Education**

Kerala's lead in literacy and school education over other regions of the country can be traced back at least to the last decade of the nineteenth century. In 1891, the literacy rate of Travancore (13.4) and Malabar (12.9) was much higher than that of India (5.8). In 1901, the literacy of Cochin (13.4) was much higher than that of India (5.3). (Ramachandran 2010). Educational advancement of Kerala is partly on account of the involvement of non-governmental agencies like the missionaries and christian church in the early period. Later on, agencies like Nair Service Society (NSS) and the Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Sangham (SNDP) got involved in starting schools and colleges. These agencies were supported by the state by way of land, buildings and also grants in aid. The share of educational expenditure in total government expenditure in Travancore increased significantly from a mere 1.9 per cent during 1867-70 to 15 per cent in 1946-47. In the princely State of Cochin, the share of education increased from 0.9 percent to 17.0 percent during the period. The Travancore - Cochin State had spent 26 percent of its expenditure on education in 1954-55 (Table fifteen).

Even after the formation of the Kerala state, the government expenditure on education continued to increase. The share of education in the revenue expenditure of the state increased from 35.1 in 1960-61 to 36.7 per cent in 1970-71. The share of education reached its peak in 1978-79 (38.7 per cent) and thereafter fell to 34.9 per cent by 1980-81. It increased to 37.2 per cent during 1982-83. Thereafter there is a steady decline in the share of education in the state's expenditure (Kerala Education Commission 1999). The declining trend continued even after the turnaround of the Kerala economy from 1987-88. From 27.5 per cent in 1990-91, the share of education came down to 19.1 per cent in 2008-09 (See Table sixteen). It may be noted that the present share of education in the state's revenue expenditure is much lower than the share in the expenditure of Travancore Cochin state in 1954-55. But Table seventeen shows that revenue

expenditure on education in relation to the gross state domestic product (GSDP) of Kerala shows a steadily declining trend from 1990-91 onwards. In 1960-61, the state spent 3.7 per cent of its gross state domestic Product on Education. The ratio of expenditure on education to GSDP went up to 4.8 per cent in 1970-71 and then to 6.1 per cent in 1980-81. It reached the peak levels in 85-86 and 86-87 (7.1 per cent) (Kerala Education Commission, 1999). In many years of the seventies and the eighties, the outlay on education exceeded the Kothari Commission's norm of 6 per cent of the GDP (Kothari Commission, 1966).

The steady decline in the share of education in the budgeted expenditure is seen not only in the revenue expenditure but also in capital expenditure and plan expenditure. The share of education in capital expenditure fell from 1.7 per cent during the fifth five year plan to 1.5 per cent in the sixth plan and to 1.2 per cent in the seventh plan (George 1999). As may be seen from Table eighteen, the share of education in the capital expenditure went up to 5.7 during the eighth plan but came down to 3.3 per cent during the ninth plan. During the tenth plan, the share of education went up marginally to 3.6 percent. During the eleventh plan it went down to 2.1 percent.

In the post reform period, the share of education in capital expenditure came down from 3.5 per cent in 1990-91 to 1.2 per cent in 2008-09 (Table sixteen). Coming to plan expenditure, the share of plan expenditure on education in the total plan expenditure came down from 10.6 per cent during the fifth plan to 8.2 per cent in the sixth plan and further to 6.9 per cent during the seventh plan (George 1999). During the eighth plan, the share of education in the plan expenditure came down to 6.6 per cent and still further to 5.7 per cent during the ninth plan. During the tenth plan, the plan expenditure on education came down to 4.6 per cent. During the eleventh plan, the share of plan expenditure on education went up to 6.0 per cent. The year-wise share of plan expenditure on education in the total plan expenditure of the state came down marginally from

5.9 per cent in 1990-91 to 5.8 per cent in 2000-01. It was only 4.6 per cent in 2008-09. The share in total non plan expenditure came down from 28.7 per cent in 1990-91 to 23.7 per cent in 2000-01 and further to 19.6 per cent in 2008-09 (Table sixteen).

The plan- non-plan composition of expenditure shows that the plan component which had gone up from 5.6 per cent in 1990-91 to 5.9 per cent in 2000-01 came down steeply to 5.1 per cent in 2008-09. This implies that an overwhelming share of the total expenditure on education is on non-plan account representing current expenditure including salaries. The share of expenditure on new schemes, programmes, courses and institutions is getting less and less as years advance. The extent of under investment also comes out clearly from the already small capital component of total expenditure on education which itself has come down from 2.5 per cent in 1990-91 to 0.6 per cent in 2000-01. The share went up marginally to 0.9 per cent in 2008-09 (Table nineteen).

Table twenty gives the expenditure on different sub-sectors of education. The data pertains only to the period from 2000-01 as the data for earlier years are not comparable because the pre-degree courses were delinked from colleges and were attached to higher secondary schools by that year. The Table shows that the share of primary education in total educational expenditure has come down partly due to the large scale central funding through Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) programme. The share of secondary education went up partly due to the expansion of this sub-sector following the delinking of pre-degree courses from colleges and attaching them to the school system. The school system as a whole accounts for nearly four fifths of the total expenditure on education. The already low share of higher education in 2000-01(14.7 %) came down to 13.5 per cent in 2008-09. The share of technical education, which again was quite small, went up only marginally.

Table twenty one shows the share of plan expenditure and capital expenditure in both higher education and technical education. The share of plan expenditure in higher education increased from 2.2 per cent in 1991-92 to 7.4 per cent in 2008-09. The share of plan expenditure on technical education however came down from 26.3 per cent in 1991-92 to 18.5 per cent in 2008-09. The share of capital expenditure in higher education which was quite low decreased marginally between 1991-92 and 2008-09. The decline in the capital component of technical education was quite steep.

Table twenty two gives the plan and non-plan grants to the universities in Kerala. The Table shows the drastic reduction in the plan component of grants to the universities in Kerala. It came down from 25.4 per cent in 2003-04 to 13.8 per cent in 2007-08. The annual growth rates in plan expenditure was quite low in 2004-05 and 2005-06 (3.3 per cent and 4.6 per cent). But the growth rates picked up in 2006-07 to 11.9 per cent and further to 18.7 per cent in 2007-08. Much of these increases are on account of non-plan expenditure.

The drastic reduction in plan expenditure as well as capital expenditure prevented the government from expanding capacity of government owned and government aided institutions in the higher education and technical education sectors when the demand for enrolment and funds was growing. This vacuum was filled initially by the self-financing institutions in other states to which there was a massive exodus of students from Kerala. Later on, the newly established self-financing institutions within the state met this demand. The government considered the starting of large number of such institutions as a softer option. The under investment by the government *inter alia* led to erosion in quality of institutions owned by it, thus increasing the private costs for the students of the institutions, a trend noted earlier.

### **Educational Expenditure of SC and ST Departments**

The share of education in the actual plan expenditure on welfare of scheduled castes which was 22.0 per cent in 2007-08 came down to 13.3 per cent in 2008-09. The utilization of approved outlay on education also came down from 80 per cent to 53.1 per cent in 2008-09. The share of expenditure on education in total plan expenditure on welfare of scheduled tribes was 39.0 per cent in 2007-08. The utilization rate on approved outlay on education of STs in 2007-08 was 91.8 per cent.

During 2008-09, 233314 Scheduled Caste students availed of one or more types of financial assistance from the government. The largest number of students (51.3 per cent) availed of lumpsum grants. But stipends accounted for the single largest share in the total quantum of financial assistance. Details are given in Table twenty three. An equal number of ST students of the 55245 students unlike in the case of SC students, availed of both lumpsum grant and stipend. Again, unlike in the case of SC students lumpsum grants accounted for 71.9 per cent of the total financial assistance to ST students.

In the total financial assistance given by the state to SC students, those in higher education accounted for 52.2 per cent of the total amount. In the case of ST students, those studying in post higher secondary institutions accounted for only 17 per cent of the total assistance.

The educational assistance in different forms extended by the government together with reservation in admission has helped the SC and ST students to avail of educational opportunities to a large extent. But these opportunities cannot be availed of by the poorest among the SCs and STs as the amount of assistance is not being revised frequently taking into account the rapid increase in private costs of education especially of higher and technical education. For instance, the amount of financial assistance to SC and ST students fixed in January 2001 was revised only after seven years in February 2008. The present



rates are the once fixed three years back in February 2008. Fees of those SC and ST students getting admission to self-financing colleges in the government quota are reimbursed at the rates agreed upon by the government and the self-financing colleges. But it is found that they are inadequate to meet the non tuition fees, other academic expenses as non academic expenses.

### **Non-Financial Entry Barriers**

Table one indicates that it is not poverty or other financial barriers alone that stand in the way of the SC and ST students getting enrolled in professional educational institutions. Even among the non poor households, the enrolment of SC students was much lower than that of others. This suggests the possibility of the SC students facing larger non financial barriers inherent in their caste/community status and their social and educational background. It is also possible that the SC/STs among the non poor are in the lower levels within the group (Sanal Mohan (2002) in his study of a village in Kozhikode District found that even today very few Dalits have been able to come up to the level of middle class). But it is interesting to note that in the enrolment of SC/STs is higher among the poor than among the non SC/ST poor. This may be partly on account of the liberal financial assistance received by the SC/ST students compared to non SC/ST students.

## PART III

### **Socio-political Factors behind Exclusion**

Expanding educational opportunities irrespective of regions, religions, castes and classes, was top most in the agenda of all the government and political parties in the past. State funding of education directly or through liberal grants-in-aid to private agencies (an earlier version of today's public-private participation) helped the process of expanding educational opportunities. Till recently, the need for subsidizing education by the government was not a contested issue among the political parties. It is this political consensus in the state, which had contributed to the inclusiveness of Kerala model of educational and social development in the past. But the political parties today do not have any clear strategy of protecting the gains of the Kerala model of development from the onslaught of privatization and marketization emanating from within and outside the country. Part of the reason for this situation lies in the growing influence of the affluent middle class in all political parties. Besides, avowedly due to the fiscal crisis from the middle of the eighties, all the political parties had gone, to varying degrees, for the easier option of leaving the system to the market. They do not seem to have any new strategy for keeping the system inclusive against the odds of changing environment within and outside the state.

There is a growing tendency for the middle class in Kerala as elsewhere in India to opt out of the government owned and aided educational system avowedly because of its low quality but also due to social reasons. This tendency to quit the government system of education by the vocal and influential middle class, in turn, has led to further deterioration of the system and the expansion of the unaided sector. A vicious circle thus seems to be closing in. As the Indian Human Development Survey report India (2010) observes, parents who send their children to private schools have greater resources both in terms of

monetary resources and their own education. Hence their departure from government schools reduces the most vocal and active parents who are capable of demanding accountability from schools and are able to compensate for teacher deficiencies through home teaching. The departure of these children by schools may well diminish the pressure on government schools to be accountable and reduce the quality of the classroom learning environment. Thus, once the middle-class exodus from government schools begins, schools could easily get caught in a lose-lose situation, leading to a progressive deterioration of standards. This observation is consistent with results from the United States, where the flight of the white middle class from inner-city schools led to a decline in the quality of the school system.

Put it in other words, large sections of the people of Kerala are gradually losing their stakes in the government system whether it is of education or health care (George and Tharakan 2005). This, in turn, has led to their unwillingness to pay for these public services. It is this vocal segment of population with increasing political influence and financial clout, which now sets the agenda in the discourses on education and politics in the state. This, in turn, has led to the shifting of priorities of public spending away from social services, which the middle class is no longer availing.

One of the reasons why SCs and STs have not been able to get their voices heard in the political sphere in Kerala is their limited number. In Kerala, SCs constitute only 9.8 per cent of the population as against 16.2 per cent in India. The STs in Kerala constitute only 1.1 per cent of the population as against 8.2 per cent in India. What is more, the SC and ST population are scattered widely unlike in many other states. There are only two Panchayats where the STs are in majority (Pudur and Athirappally). There are only three Panchayats with majority of SC population (Munnar, Chithara, Kalanjoor)

There is deeper reason for the continuing exclusion of SC and ST groups in diverse fields including education. It is related to the character of politics in Kerala particularly the politics of the left. It is argued that left in India as also in Kerala had thought that a transformation of a caste ridden society can take place under the common identity of class, in the process unifying and eroding several factions existing in society. However, several recent studies have given attention to the persisting caste based divisions within the class. Even the own organizations of SC/ST communities are organized on party lines. So the caste based agenda gets submerged in the broader political agenda of the parties.

**Table 1**  
**Gross Enrolment Rates of Different Social Groups in Post Higher Secondary Education in Kerala**

Year	Poor			Non-Poor			All			
	SC	ST	Others	SC	ST	Others	SC	ST	Others	Total
1993-94	3.85	NA	6.6	1.5	34.5	19.8	2.3	34.5	18.0	16.7
1999-00	4.09	NA	6.9	9.4	12.6	26.5	8.1	10.3	22.8	20.8
2004-05	13.3	8.15	6.9	17.1	20.5	28.6	16.7	15.1	26.3	24.9

Source: Dubey Amaresh (2008), 'Determinants of Post Higher Secondary Enrolment in India', in Report by University Grants Commission on Higher Education in India, Issues related to Expansion, Inclusiveness, Quality and Finance', New Delhi.

Note: The Sample Size of STs is not available for the years 1993-94 and 1999-00.

**Table 2**  
**Share of SC/ST students in Total Students Strength in Arts and Science Colleges in Kerala at Degree (UG) and Post-Graduate (PG) level**  
(Figures in percentage)

Year	UG		PG	
	SC	ST	SC	ST
1994	7.6	0.4	11.1	0.7
1995	8.5	0.5	10.8	1.0
1996	7.5	0.5	10.8	0.9
1997	7.1	0.5	10.0	0.8
1998	6.6	0.7	11.6	1.4
1999	9.1	0.7	9.4	0.9
2000	10.3	0.7	10.8	0.9
2001	9.3	0.7	10.4	0.9
2002	9.5	1.7	11.5	4.4
2003	13.7	1.1	11.4	1.1
2004	14.3	1.1	13.3	1.4
2005	14.2	1.0	16.0	1.3
2007	14.0	1.5	13.0	1.6
2008	14.5	1.4	12.4	1.5

Source: Economic Review, Various Issues, State Planning Board,

Thiruvananthapuram, Government of Kerala

**Table 3**  
**Ratio of SC/ST Students in Total Students Enrolment in**  
**Arts and Science Colleges in Kerala**

(Figures in percentage)

Courses	2005-06		2008-09	
	SC	ST	SC	ST
BA	16.1	1.4	15.9	1.9
BSc	12.2	0.6	12.8	0.9
Bcom	15.6	1.4	15.1	1.7
MA	15.0	1.2	13.0	2.2
MSc	9.3	0.8	10.8	0.8
Mcom	15.9	1.2	15.4	1.8

Source: Economic Review, op.cit

**Table 4**  
**Share of SC/ST Students in Regular and Self-financing Course in Sample Arts**  
**and Science Colleges**

Course	1999 Admission				2006 Admission			
	Regular		Self-financing		Regular		Self-financing	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
UG	137	8.8	5	2.9	226	16.1	10	2.6
PG	23	7.5	-	-	47	13.7	4	3.4

Source: Quoted from Zachariah George (2010), Changing Enrolment Patterns in Arts and Science Colleges in Kerala, Kerala State Higher Education Council, Government of Kerala/Centre for Socio-Economic and Environmental Studies, *Mimeo*

**Table 5**  
**Share of SC/ST Students in Total Number of Students in Polytechnics**

(Figures in percentage)

Year	SC	ST
2005-06	8.3	1.7
2006-07	8.2	1.7
2007-08	8.0	2.3
2008-09	7.9	2.3
2009-10	7.9	2.3

Source: Economic Review, op.cit.

**Table 6**  
**Number of Institutions and Number of SC/ST students during 2008-09**

Type of Institutions	Institutions	SC Students	ST Students
Arts and Science Colleges	313	35934	3276
Polytechnics	49	3143	276
Engineering colleges	82	4256	408
Medical colleges	19	350	206
Ayurveda colleges	15	48	-
Dental colleges	16	54	-
Nursing colleges	59	232	-
Pharmacy colleges	23	192	-

Source: 1. Directorate of Technical Education, Government of Kerala and Economic Review 2009, State Planning Board, Trivandrum, Government of Kerala for number of institutions.  
2. For number of Students appendix Tables 14.33 and 14.42 titled 'Details of Lumpsum Grant, Stipend to SC/ST Students during the Year 2008-09', in Economic Review 2009, State Planning Board, Trivandrum, Government of Kerala

**Table 7**  
**Performance of Students in SSLC Examination (% of Pass)**

Year	All Students	SC Students	ST Students
2001	56.22	36.74	32.85
2002	60.62	39.32	39.69
2003	64.85	43.75	37.72
2004	70.06	48.14	45.95
2005	58.61	37.09	32.55
2006	69.33	48.58	41.18
2007	82.23	65.17	60.67
2008	92.08	83.37	82.46
2009	91.89	83.74	79.21

Source: Economic Review, op.cit.

**Table 8**  
**Performance of Students in Higher Secondary Examination (% of Pass)**

Year	SC	ST	Others
2005-06	43.2	41.6	62.4
2006-07	46.9	40.1	65.9
2007-08	57.0	49.1	75.1
2008-09	68.5	64.8	85.2

Source: Economic Review, op.cit.

**Table 9**  
**Monthly Percapita Consumer Expenditure on Education**  
(Rs.)

MPCE Class	Rural		Urban	
	Kerala	India	Kerala	India
0-235	3.2	2.9	9.4	7.6
235-270	6.3	4.6	12.3	11.5
270-320	14.8	5.4	15.3	15.5
320-365	8.0	7.2	14.0	23.8
365-410	12.6	8.7	25.3	26.2
410-455	9.8	10.2	31.8	38.0
455-510	14.2	12.8	34.6	58.2
510-580	21.3	14.9	44.3	73.1
580-690	20.2	19.6	72.0	91.8
690-890	31.2	30.3	90.8	137.5
890-1155	47.4	43.0	165.1	198.9
1155&more	89.7	93.4	228.7	330.6
All Classes	40.7	18.1	65.5	73.7

Source: NSS (2006) Report No. 508, 'Level and Pattern of Consumer Expenditure', 2004-05

Note: Estimates based on 365 days recall period

**Table 10**  
**Average MPCE across Social Groups in Kerala (2004-05)**

(Rs.)

Social Group	Rural			Urban		
	Food	Non-Food	Total	Food	Non-Food	Total
SC	392.0	361.1	753.1	384.5	371.7	756.2
ST	269.7	248.3	518.1	627.4	888.3	1515.7
OBC	444.9	550.8	995.6	481.8	706.0	1187.8
Others	517.8	673.6	1191.3	628.4	1043.4	1671.8
All	455.6	557.5	1013.2	516.0	774.9	1290.9

Source: NSS (2006), Report No.514: Household Consumer Expenditure among Socio-Economic Groups, 2004-05



**Table 11**  
**Population below Poverty in Kerala, 2004-05,**  
**(Social Group Wise)**

(Figures in percentage)

Social Group	Rural	Urban
SC	21.6	32.5
ST	44.3	19.2
OBC	13.7	24.3
Others	6.6	7.8

Source: Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India,  
<http://tribal.nic.in/index1.asp?linkid=333&langid=1>,  
Accessed on 04/01/2011

Note: The poverty ratio among the Scheduled Tribes (STs) population may be treated with caution due to the smallness of the sample households based on which the class distribution of persons have been obtained in the NSSO (2004-05). In the Urban areas of Kerala, the number of households among Scheduled Tribes is less than ten

**Table 12**  
**Ownership of Educational Institutions in 1991 and 2008-09**

Type of Institution	1991					2008-09				
	Govt	Aided	Unaided	Total	% of Unaided in Total	Govt	Aided	Unaided	Total	% of Unaided in Total
LP schools	2565	4068	134	6767	2.0	2547	3986	269	6802	4.0
UP schools	960	1883	72	2915	2.5	952	1869	220	3041	7.2
High schools	960	1380	111	2451	4.5	1002	1429	375	2806	13.4
Higher secondary schools	49	37	0	86	0.0	735	529	439	1703	25.8
VHSE schools	179	7	0	186	0.0	261	128	0	389	0.0
ITI/ITC	28	0	274	302	90.7	57	0	504	561	89.8
Arts and Science Colleges	40	132	0	172	0.0	39	150	124	313	39.6
Polytechnics	24	6	0	30	0.0	43	6	NA	49	0.0
Engineering colleges	5	3	0	8	0.0	11	1	70	82	85.4
Medical colleges	5	0	0	5	0.0	5	2	12	19	63.2
Ayurveda colleges	3	2	1	6	16.7	3	2	10	15	66.7
Dental colleges	2	0	0	2	0.0	3	0	13	16	81.3
Homeo colleges	2	3	0	5	0.0	3	2	NA	5	0.0
Nursing colleges	3	0	0	3	0.0	5	NA	54	59	91.5
Pharmacy colleges	1	0	0	1	0.0	2	NA	21	23	91.3

Source: 1. Data for the period 1991 is quoted from KK George and Kumar Ajith N (2009), 'Kerala's Education System: From inclusion to Exclusion?', Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.XLIV, No.41.

2. 2008-09 data from Economic Review 2009, op.cit  
and Directorate of Technical Education, op.cit.

**Table 13**  
**Share of SC/ST Students in Schools under Different Managements**  
(Figures in percentage)

Year	Govt.		Pvt. Aided		Pvt. Unaided	
	SC	ST	SC	ST	SC	ST
2004-05	13.1	2.3	10.2	1.0	2.9	0.3
2005-06	13.2	2.4	10.2	1.0	2.9	0.3
2007-08	13.5	2.7	10.5	1.1	3.3	0.4
2008-09	13.5	2.9	10.5	1.2	3.3	0.3
2009-10	13.7	3.1	10.6	1.3	3.6	0.3

Source: Economic Review, op.cit.

**Table 14**  
**Share of SC/ST students in Total Number of Students in ITI/ITCs in Kerala**  
(Figures in percentage)

Year	ITI		ITC	
	SC	ST	SC	ST
2000	3.2	0.6	3.2	0.3
2005	13.9	1.0	6.6	0.3
2007	14.7	0.9	6.6	0.5
2008	20.6	2.0	8.4	0.8

Source: Economic Review, op.cit.

**Table 15**  
**Share of Education Expenditure in Total Government Expenditure in Travancore and Cochin-1867-70 to 1954-55**  
(Figures in percentage)

Year	Travancore	Cochin
1867-70	1.9	0.9
1870-79	2.7	1.5
1880-89	3.4	2.8
1890-99	4.6	4.2
1900-09	6.3	4.2
1910-19	11.1	10.9
1920-29	18.3	16.5
1930-39	19.8	18.1
1940-43	16.1	17.3
1946-47	15.0	17.0
Travancore-Cochin		
1950-51	17.0	
1953-54	21.0	
1954-55	26.0	

Source: Quoted by Salim Abdul A and PRG Nair (2002), 'Education Development in India: The Kerala Experience Since 1800', Anmol Publications, New Delhi.

**Table 16**  
**Share of Education, Art and Culture in Total Revenue, Capital, Plan and Non-plan**  
**and Total Expenditure of Kerala**

(Figures in percentage)

Year	Revenue Expenditure on Education in Total revenue expenditure	Capital Expenditure on Education in Total Capital expenditure	Plan Expenditure on Education in Total Plan Expenditure	Non- plan Expenditure on Education in Total Non-plan Expenditure	Total Expenditure on Education in Total Expenditure of Govt.
1990-91	27.5	3.5	5.9	28.7	23.5
1991-92	26.0	2.3	5.0	25.5	21.3
1992-93	24.9	3.3	5.7	25.5	21.4
1993-94	26.7	3.1	5.3	28.0	22.8
1994-95	26.7	2.5	5.3	28.6	23.1
1995-96	24.6	2.1	5.8	25.9	21.1
1996-97	23.8	2.3	5.8	26.0	20.7
1997-98	21.4	1.8	4.2	24.2	18.2
1998-99	21.2	2.0	4.6	24.4	18.7
1999-2000	22.6	1.2	5.6	24.7	20.4
2000-01	22.1	1.2	5.8	23.7	20.0
2001-02	21.2	1.3	5.9	21.8	19.0
2002-03	20.1	0.8	4.1	21.7	17.6
2003-04	19.9	0.3	3.4	18.0	15.7
2004-05	19.0	0.8	3.5	19.3	16.2
2005-06	18.8	1.5	5.1	19.5	16.6
2006-07	18.8	1.6	5.3	19.2	17.1
2007-08	18.2	0.9	4.0	18.2	15.9
2008-09*	19.1	1.2	4.6	19.6	16.8

Source: Reserve Bank of India, State Finances, Various Issues, Mumbai

\* indicates Revised Estimate

**Table 17**  
**Ratio of Revenue Expenditure on**  
**Education to GSDP at Current Prices**  
 (Figures in Percentage)

Year	Ratio of Revenue Expenditure on Education to GSDP
1990-91	5.5
1991-92	4.8
1992-93	4.6
1993-94	4.4
1994-95	4.2
1995-96	3.7
1996-97	3.6
1997-98	3.6
1998-99	3.5
1999-2000	3.8
2000-01	3.6
2001-02	3.2
2002-03	3.4
2003-04	3.2
2004-05	3.0
2005-06	2.8
2006-07	2.7
2007-08	2.7
2008-09*	2.9

Source: 1. For Expenditure data, RBI, State Finances, op.cit.  
 2.For GSDP data, CSO, State Domestic Product Series, Various Issues  
 \* indicates Revised Estimate

**Table 18**  
**Share of Education, Art, Culture in Government Expenditure of Kerala**  
 (Figures in Percentage)

Plan Periods	Revenue Expenditure	Capital Expenditure	Total Expenditure	Plan Expenditure	Non-Plan Expenditure
VIII	25.2	5.7	23.6	6.6	28.6
IX	21.7	3.3	20.7	5.7	25.1
X	19.2	3.6	18.6	4.6	22.0
XI	18.7	2.1	17.8	6.0	25.0

Source: Calculated from Finance Accounts of Kerala, Various Issues, Comptroller and Auditor General of India

Note: Since the 11th Five Year Plan has started in the Year 2007, The accounts data is available only for two years (2007-08 and 2008-09)

**Table 19**  
**Share of Total Plan and Capital**  
**Expenditures on Education in Total Expenditure on Education**  
(Figures in Percentage)

Year	Share of Plan Expenditure	Share of Capital Expenditure
1990-91	5.6	2.5
1991-92	4.8	2.1
1992-93	5.5	2.5
1993-94	5.4	2.2
1994-95	5.4	1.6
1995-96	6.6	1.5
1996-97	7.4	1.6
1997-98	6.9	1.6
1998-99	7.2	1.4
1999-2000	6.2	0.6
2000-01	5.9	0.6
2001-02	5.6	0.8
2002-03	5.4	0.6
2003-04	3.4	0.5
2004-05	4.2	0.8
2005-06	6.3	1.2
2006-07	4.7	0.9
2007-08	4.0	0.8
2008-09*	5.1	0.9

Source: RBI, State Finances, op.cit.

\* indicates Revised Estimates

**Table 20**  
**Share of Different Sub-sectors of Education in the Total Revenue**  
**Expenditure on Education in Kerala**

(Figures in Percentage)

Year	Primary Education	Secondary Education	Higher Education	Technical Education	Others
2000-01	45.5	32.7	14.7	4.2	4.2
2001-02	42.3	30.6	19.8	4.8	2.6
2002-03	41.6	32.2	18.6	4.1	3.5
2003-04	41.7	34.5	16.3	4.2	3.2
2004-05	40.9	35.2	15.8	4.6	3.6
2005-06	40.4	35.9	15.0	4.9	3.8
2006-07	41.6	36.4	13.7	4.8	3.4
2007-08	41.0	38.5	13.3	4.1	3.1
2008-09*	38.7	37.9	13.5	4.4	3.7

Source: 1. Finance Accounts of Kerala, op.cit.

2. RBI, State Finances, op.cit.

\* indicates Revised Estimates

**Table 21**  
**Share of Plan and Capital Expenditures in the Total**  
**Expenditure on Higher and Technical Education**

(Figures in

Percentage)

Year	Share of Plan Expenditure		Share of Capital Expenditure	
	Higher Education	Technical Education	Higher Education	Technical Education
1991-92	2.2	26.3	1.3	19.5
1995-96	7.0	30.4	2.2	13.6
2000-01	5.5	27.9	0.4	7.8
2004-05	6.5	25.4	1.6	16.5
2008-09	7.4	18.5	1.2	7.1

Source: Finance Accounts of Kerala,  
op.cit.

**Table 22**  
**Plan and Non plan grant to Universities in Kerala**

(Rs.Crore)

2003-04	Plan	30.96 (25.40)
	Non Plan	90.59
	Total	121.55
2004-05	Plan	19.53 (15.50)
	Non Plan	106.44
	Total	125.97
2005-06	Plan	20.13 (15.20)
	Non Plan	111.73
	Total	131.86
2006-07	Plan	21.75 (14.70)
	Non Plan	125.85
	Total	147.6
2007-08	Plan	24.25 (13.80)
	Non Plan	151.08
	Total	175.33

Source : Economic Review, op.cit.

Note : Figures in brackets are percentage of plan grants to total grants

**Table 23**  
**Percentage of SC and ST Students Availing Different**  
**Types**  
**of Financial Assistance to Total during 2008-09**

Item	SC		ST	
	No. of Students	Amount	No. of Students	Amount
Lumpsum grant	51.3	27.5	49.7	71.9
Stipend	26.1	44.1	49.7	27.8
Scholarship	21.2	27.8	NA	NA
Pocket Money	1.4	0.6	0.5	0.3

Source: Economic Review, 2009, op.cit.

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## APPENDIX I

### DRIFTING INTO DEPRESSION

Prof. A was sitting in his cabin in the department when a young woman came in seeking help. Her brother had been a student in the same Engineering College and had passed out last year. But ever since leaving the college, he was in a peculiar state of mind, very moody and withdrawn, not mingling with his friends, not going out, not applying for any job, and being very irritable when questioned about these things. The aged parents were worried and concerned. She had come to find out whether something had happened in the college to upset him. She was directed to Prof. A by the head of the department because Prof. A had been the chief advisor to her brother's batch.

When Prof. A retrieved the student records of this boy, he saw very disturbing picture.

This student had a number of back papers, starting with the first year and accumulating over the semesters. Apparently, he had been pulled down by the weight of back papers, and had not been able to take care of the current semester. The number of back papers had become so overwhelming large that he had no hope of clearing them, especially now that he was away from college and co-students, and out of touch with academic work.

His parents were blissfully unaware of his deterioration situation. They thought that everything was fine because he was moving to higher semesters regularly. Little did they know that it was possible in the engineering college to move up to higher semesters without passing the examinations. His relatives and neighbours had also been led to believe that he was a qualified engineer. Unable to face the reality, the boy had gone into depression.

Sivasankaran C J and Babu Suresh B V, (2010), *Wastage in Engineering Education in Kerala*, in K N Nair, P R Gopinathan Nair (eds), *Higher Education in Kerala: Micro-Level Perspectives*, pp 103, Danish Books, New Delhi.

## APPENDIX II

### **'THE BEST THING THAT HAPPENED TO ME WAS BEING THROWN OUT!'**

Dr. H was quite possibly the inspiration and the untiring effort behind the launching of the Students Advisory System in College A. He had created a network of dedicated teachers to be Group Advisors to sets of 20 students. Group advisors kept meticulous records of the personal and academic background and progress of their wards.

The record of one student, K, caused worry to his advisor J, brought the fact to the attention of Dr. H. K had a good academic record up to the pre-degree level but had done consistently badly in the engineering college. He had a brother also studying in the college, who was extremely brilliant. K had failed in several papers in the first year and was struggling to get through. The professors called him and talked to him at length. Then it transpired that he had not wanted to join the engineering college but had succumbed to parental compulsions: his parents had decided that both their son should become engineers. The poor boy would rather have taken a course in the arts college, but he failed to convince his parents.

Later the professors held a frank discussion with K's parents and persuaded them to take the boy out of the engineering college and enroll him in some course of his choice.

Several years later Prof. J told us he saw K as a happy successful executive in a commercial firm. He had done a B. Com., and luckily for him that was in a season for commerce graduates. He readily and gratefully told J, 'Sir, the best thing that happened to me in the engineering college was being thrown out at the right time. Had I continued there it would have ruined my life!'

Sivasankaran C J and Babu Suresh B V, (2010), *Wastage in Engineering Education in Kerala*, in K N Nair, P R Gopinathan Nair (eds), *Higher Education in Kerala: Micro-Level Perspectives*, pp 104, Danish Books, New Delhi.