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# A Case Study: Impact of Education on Employment among the Scheduled Caste Arunthathiyars (SCAs) of Erode District in Tamil Nadu

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**Abstract**

The study attempt to find the impact of education on employment, based on cross-section data, collected through field survey in Erode district. The study concludes that educational qualification, along with their skills and experience, has significant impact on employment. All levels of education significantly influenced the employment positively. That is, when the level of education increases, the probability of getting employment also increased. As far as the Arunthathiars are concerned, the employment opportunity is high in town panchayats, municipalities and corporations with minimum educational qualifications of middle, secondary and higher secondary levels.

**Key Words**: Education, Employment.

## 1. Introduction

The development of any country mostly depends upon its growth of education. Progress of a society is possible only when its citizens are dynamic, resourceful, enterprising and responsible. Without such citizens, progress of a country cannot be achieved in any field. Education herein helps in creating such type of citizens. It is the most important single factor in achieving rapid economic development and technological progress. In the development of any country, primary education helps in creating a base while higher education is important for providing the cutting edge (Shakeel Ahmad 2010).

Education is also very important for general well-being and it plays a crucial role in absorbing the modern technology by under-developed countries and in developing the capacity for self-sustaining growth and development. Moreover, education improves the human capital and raises the productive capacity. Vicious circles of poverty can be undone through providing improved education facilities (Gurupandi and Amutharani 2010).

The Scheduled Caste (SCs) have traditionally occupied the lowest status in the Indian society. Today, untouchability is outlawed, and these groups are recognized by the Indian Constitution to be

especially disadvantaged because of their past history of inferior treatment, and are therefore entitled to certain rights and preferential treatment.

The Scheduled Castes population, numbering 138 million in India accounted for 16.48 per cent of the total population of the country. It has now increased to 166 million and accounts for 16.63 per cent of total population of the country which shows that there has been increase in the SC population during the last decade. Tamil Nadu is one among the states which comprise a considerable SC population. There are 76 sub-castes in the State, of which Arunthathiars are at the bottom level in the social hierarchy.

The literacy rate among the SCs in the states in the country continues to be lower than the national average. They were denied all educational opportunities in the past being mostly illiterates. After independence, the government of India has implemented so many policies and programmes for the improvement of education among Scheduled Castes. In the case of dropouts, the situation seems to be still worse in the case of SC girls than boys, at all levels of education. Therefore, the above observations justify that the level of education of SCs is very low. The Constitution of India promises free and compulsory education to these communities. Though more than sixty years have passed, majority of the SC population are illiterates (Francis 2009).

## 2. Review of Literature

There are many studies made on the illiteracy among the SCs. A few studies have analysed the impact of education on employment with the primary data analysis. In this context, the present study makes an attempt to analyse the existing literature to identity the gaps.

**Patel and Nimish Shah (2005)** dealt with vocational education for better employment opportunities. Globalization posed a number of challenges to technical education. The biggest challenge ahead was to supply technically trained staff to corporate world. The graduating students were lacking in practical knowledge and knowledge of emerging technology, and hence they found difficulties in employment in a rapidly changing environment. The aims were to provide for the diversification of educational opportunities, enhance individual employment ability and reduce the gap between demand and supply of skilled manpower. Hence, vocational training education received much importance.

**Ramesh Chandra (2008)** has revealed that a majority of Dalits (SCs) in rural areas as well as towns and cities are economically weak and very few among them are prosperous. Indian Education Commission-1882, however, in its report recommended for the education of the deprived sections of society. Acute poverty, caste systems and untouchability forced them to be illiterate and an exploited lot. The Indian National congress proclaimed that socialism was the only way to end poverty, misery and unemployment in the country.

**Shashank Chaturvedi (2009)** has argued that the education for the marginalized communities in India needs to be more skill-oriented both in terms of life skills as well as livelihood skills, and there is an urgent need to ensure quality education for all. Further, the strong growth prospects of our economy coupled with the present phase of globalisation has fuelled the demand for education in India.

**Reddeppa Reddy (2009)** has strongly opined that the literate people are moving from primary occupation to secondary and tertiary occupations and the literacy rate was lower in the primary sector and it was exceedingly higher in other sectors. Further, the employment opportunities were being provided in organized as well as unorganized sectors and the education levels in most households has increased consistently from a low base 15 years ago. The focus is now on the skill and knowledge to increase productivity and human quality.

**Promila Yadava (2009)** has pointed out that acute economic deprivation and social disabilities accentuate the problem of illiteracy among Scheduled Caste / Scheduled Tribes. High dropout rates and no consolidation of acquired skills and the problem of dropouts in the adult literacy programme are heavily overlooked. Further, the 11$^{th}$ Plan aims at achieving 80 per cent literacy rate, reducing gender gap in literacy to 10 per cent, reducing regional, social and gender disparities and extending coverage to 35 plus age group with social focus on SCs, and the Plan would also endorse goals of education for all as applicable to literacy aims of achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015.

**Rajkumar (2012)** has explained the demographic and educational status of scheduled castes in Andhra Pradesh through a study of west Godavari and Visakhapatnam district. A sample of 400 households is selected for the primary study. Thus, a multi stage Random Sampling Technique was used to select the sample households. In the overall literate's heads, a majority had only secondary level of education and literacy of Visakhapatnam district is recorded higher while west Godavari district noticed higher literacy in the case of child literacy.

The main objective of this study attempt to analyse the impact of education on the employment and the employment opportunities available to the SCAs in the study area.

## 3. Methodology and Collection of Data

The data required for this study were collected from primary sources. The Primary Data required for the study have been collected from the selected respondents of Erode district. A Multistage Sampling Technique was used to select the respondents by selecting the district in the first stage, blocks in the second stage, villages in the third stage and educated respondents in the fourth stage.

The data used in the present study is collected through field survey in the year 2022. Different demographic, economic and human capital related variables are also considered in the study. A sample of 300 respondents is randomly drawn from urban areas of the district of Erode. There are certain reasons in selecting Erode District as study area.

Erode District constituted the universe for this study. Erode District was chosen purposively, partly due to prominence of Scheduled Caste Arunthathiar. From the14 blocks of the district three blocks were chosen purposively and they were Erode, Gobichettipalayam (hereafter Gobi) and Sathyamangalam (hereafter Sathy) blocks. The blocks selection was made based on the prominence of Scheduled Caste Arunthathiar. Disproportionate Random Sampling Technique was used to select the respondents. Due to time and resource constraints, from each block, literate respondents were selected.

## 4. Tools of Analysis

The following appropriate tools were employed to analyse the data with reference to the objective selected for the study.

## 5. Conventional Analysis

Simple tabular statements were prepared to work out percentages and average values. The study is based on an empirical analysis and the researcher made the analysis at two levels. At the first level, a primary analysis of the employed workers has been made, and at the second level, an econometric analysis of employment is modeled in the framework of the traditional theory of utility maximization by using the maximum likelihood Logit Model. The logit model has been explained with the help of odds ratio.

It is very difficult to explain the negative odds directly. So taking inverse of odds will be much easier to explain the odds (**Stephen L. DesJardins 2001**).

Formula: 1/Odds Ratio = Inverse Odds Ratio

## 6. Results and Discussion

In this section, an attempt has been made to test the hypothesis framed for the present study. The hypothesis reads as 'The level of education increases the probability of getting employment among the Arunthathiars'. To test the hypothesis, a logistic regression model has been applied.

### A. Descriptive Statistics

**Table 1: Descriptive Analysis of Some Selected Variables**

| Sl. No. | Variables | Mean | Std. Deviation | Skewness | Kurtosis |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Age | 36.23 | 0.490 | 1.685 | 1.975 |
| 2 | Sex | 0.76 | 0.430 | -1.202 | -0.558 |
| 3 | Family Size (TFM) | 3.54 | 1.042 | 0.974 | 2.636 |
| 4 | Type of Family (TF) | 0.08 | 0.277 | 3.030 | 7.231 |
| 5 | Assets AST | 0.95 | 0.218 | -4.150 | 15.327 |
| 6 | Marital Status (MS) | 0.63 | 0.484 | -0.541 | -1.719 |
| 7 | Middle Level (MIDL) | 0.84 | 0.364 | -1.899 | 1.615 |
| 8 | Secondary (SEC) | 0.73 | 0.445 | -1.041 | -0.922 |
| 9 | Higher Secondary (HSE) | 0.47 | 0.500 | 0.134 | -1.995 |
| 10 | Graduate (UG) | 0.16 | 0.364 | 1.899 | 1.615 |
| 11 | Masters, M.Phil. Ph.D. & Professionals (PROFES) | 0.11 | 0.313 | 2.505 | 4.306 |
| 12 | Educated Father (EDUFTR) | 0.64 | 0.729 | 6.927 | 89.922 |
| 13 | Educated Mother (EDUMTR) | 0.54 | 0.499 | -0.148 | -1.991 |
| 14 | Experience (EXP) | 5.99 | 7.366 | 2.253 | 5.183 |

Source: Computed.

Table 1 describes some of the statistical variables related to the model fitted in the following paragraphs. According to the analysis, 0.84 respondents are educated upto middle school followed by secondary level (0.73). About 0.47 have finished their higher secondary level of education. The respondents' educational level at UG and professional levels stood at an average of 0.16 and 0.11 respectively. Father and mother education of the respondents' average is 0.64 and 0.54. The workers' experience average is 5.99 and their average age is 36.23. The shape of distribution for secondary and higher secondary is plato kurtic and for professional education is lepto kurtic.

### B. Logistic Regression Estimate

A logistic regression was conducted to predict the probability of getting employment opportunity among 300 households using various predictors. A test of the model was good fit (Chi-Square 178.999, P<0.000 with df: 13) Nagelkerke R of 0.614 indicated a moderately strong relationship between prediction and grouping. The overall model was good as -2 log likelihood stood at 216.375[a].

**Table 2: Logistic Regression Estimates of Employment**

| Sl. No. | Variables | Beta | Odds Ratio | Inverse Odds Ratio |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Constant | -3.984* | .019 | - |
| 2 | Age | -0.502 | .605 | 1.65 |
| 3 | Sex | -0.128 | .880 | 1.13 |
| 4 | Family Size (TFM) | 0.581 | 1.787 | - |
| 5 | Type of Family (TF) | 0.097 | 1.102 | - |
| 6 | Assets AST | -1.114* | .328 | 3.04 |
| 7 | Marital Status (MS) | 2.997* | 20.025 | - |
| 8 | Middle Level (MIDL) | 3.457* | 31.718 | - |
| 9 | Secondary (SEC) | 1.199** | 3.316 | - |
| 10 | Higher Secondary (HSE) | -2.659* | .070 | 14.28 |
| 11 | Graduate (UG) | -1.561* | .210 | 4.76 |
| 12 | Masters, M.Phil. Ph.D. & Professionals (PROFES) | 0.118 | 1.126 | - |
| 13 | Educated Father (EDUFTR) | 0.720*** | 2.054 | - |
| 14 | Educated Mother (EDUMTR) | 0.095* | 1.100 | - |
| -2 Log likelihood = 216.375[a]<br>Chi-square (13df) = 178.999<br>Cox & Snell R Square = 0.449<br>Nagelkerke R Square = 0.614 | | | Sample Size = 300<br>Level of Significance = 0.000 | |

**Source**: Computed.

**Note:** * Significant at 1% level, ** Significant at 5% level, *** Significant at 10% level.

Table 2 interprets the Logit estimates of the employment equation. The table contains four columns. The beta value of the selected variables are reported in column 2, and column 3 reveals the

EXP (B) value. The significant levels of the explanatory variables are presented in column 4. Among the sample respondents, it is visibly noticed that majority of the explanatory variables under consideration have shown statistically significant net effects on the respondents' influence on employment, controlling for all the variables used in the model. The intercept term in employment equation is negative and highly significant. This significant result shows that the effect of intercept term on employment is more important. The beta values of the type of family (TF) and total assets (AST) are positive but do not significantly influence the respondent's employment. Marital status (MS) is negatively related and statistically significant at 1 per cent level on employment.

The employment opportunities and education are positively related. So a set of dichotomous variables representing the different level of education were used for analyzing the contribution of education on employment. All the coefficients of the levels of education are positively related except UG and Professional (PROFES), but all the educational levels are statistically significant on employment. It is interesting to note that respondents who secured secondary level education have higher probability of having employment (EXP. B: 31.718) than those who are at other levels of educational qualification. However, the other levels of education too turn out to be highly significant (p: 0.000). The higher secondary level education (1.199) is also statistically significant at 5 per cent level and has a positive impact on employment. The experience (0.095) gained by the respondents also influences the employment opportunity as it was significant at 1 per cent level.

## 7. Conclusion

The present study traced out the impact of education on employment, based on cross-section data, collected through field survey in Erode district. The study concludes that educational qualification, along with their skills and experience, has significant impact on employment. All levels of education significantly influenced the employment positively. That is, when the level of education increases, the probability of getting employment also increased. The impact of educated mother is positive and significant on respondents' employment, while sex, total family members, type of family and assets affected employment insignificantly. As far as the Arunthathiars are concerned, the employment opportunity is high in town panchayats, municipalities and corporations with minimum educational qualifications of middle, secondary and higher secondary levels. Hence the Arunthathiars are entering jobs at an early stage of their higher education, especially, when they are at the secondary or higher secondary levels.

## 8. Suggestions

The following are the important suggestions formulated by the researcher as derived from the present study.

- As the number of self employed respondents were meagre in the study area, technical skills training may be provided to the Arunthathiars, which will increase the self employment opportunity level among them.
- Due to lack of awareness, a large number of respondents studied upto secondary level only. So, the government and NGOs should create awareness about higher education and its importance. Further, to reduce the dropout level, awareness has to be created among them.

- As the employment opportunity for UG and professional courses were low, they may provided some relaxation in terms of marks, age limit, employment seniority, etc., to compete with other SCs and backward communities.
- As most of the families in the study area were poor, to raise the motivation for higher education among the Arunthathiars, in addition to scholarships, the government has to provide substantial stipend, so that they go for higher studies without any hurdles.

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