

The Interplay of Caste and Education in Sri Lanka: A Case Study

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Sri Lanka is inherently rich with cultural diversity and historical complexities, yet consistently struggles with persistent inequality. Caste marginalization, pedagogical prejudice, socio-political discrimination, and unequal resource allocation remained unresolved. Education is a basic human right that plays a vital role in social mobility and economic growth, yet it is a “double edged sword” with the power to both empower and oppress individuals. The objective of the study is to critically examine the intersectionality of caste and education, which remains a significant barrier to social justice and access to quality education in Sri Lanka. This study further investigates how teacher allocation and resource distribution make a marginalized school more disadvantaged. Firsthand data were collected from two villages belong to the caste “Achiri” (metal workers) in Kekirawa, North Central Province, Sri Lanka during field visits to a Primary School. A qualitative research design was used throughout the case study to collect data. The case study is presented as a “fiction” to reveal the harsh reality concealed within society. The findings revealed that people from “Achiri” are victimized by systematic biases and barriers within the existing educational system. It was found that this Primary school, a school serving marginalized communities encounters unequal resource allocation and teacher distribution making them more vulnerable within mainstream society. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of the complex interplay between caste and education in Sri Lanka highlighting the need for transformative approaches to address systemic inequalities and promote social justice in education, especially within caste-based schools. Policymakers, educators, and researchers need to work towards an equitable and inclusive education system to ensure quality education for all regardless of caste.

Keywords: Cast, Education, Fiction, Inequality, Marginalization