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SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH COLLOQUIUM

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Educational Dropout as a Social Process: A Sociological Study of Tribal Communities of Jhabua District, Madhya Pradesh

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Dr. Amrita Sastry is an Associate Professor of Sociology at Jesus and Mary College, University of Delhi, with over fifteen years of teaching and research experience. Trained at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, her doctoral work in the Sociology of Education critically examines the role of educational institutions in shaping social stratification, access, and mobility.

Abstract

The study examines educational dropout as a social process among the tribal communities in Jhabua District of Madhya Pradesh, a region marked by persistent socio-economic deprivation and educational marginalization. Rather than viewing dropout as an individual or family failure, the research explores into the interconnected structural, cultural, and institutional processes operating over time. The study explores how poverty, livelihood insecurity, seasonal migration, gender,bride price, cultural discontinuities between tribal life-worlds and formal schooling, and everyday school practices collectively shape students' disengagement from education. Anchored in sociological theories of social reproduction, cultural capital, and social exclusion, the research employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative analysis of dropout trends with qualitative insights drawn from in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and field observations involving various stakeholders such as students, parents, teachers, and local education officials. The study also critically examines the implementation of educational policies and welfare schemes at the grassroots level. The research seeks to contribute to broader sociological debates on education, tribal marginality, and inequality, while offering empirically grounded insights for more inclusive and context-sensitive educational interventions.