



**FACILITATORS OF EDUCATIONAL PARTICIPATION AMONG
SCHEDULED CASTE ADOLESCENTS: ROLE OF FAMILY, SCHOOL,
AND GOVERNMENT INTERVENTIONS**

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ABSTRACT

Background: While barriers to educational access among Scheduled Caste (SC) adolescents are well-documented, limited research systematically examines protective factors and facilitators enabling educational continuation and success. Understanding what enables educational participation is essential for designing strengthening interventions. This study identifies and characterizes key facilitators across family, school, and government intervention domains.

Objectives: (1) To identify and characterize facilitators of educational participation among SC adolescents; (2) To examine protective factors at family, school, and institutional levels; (3) To assess differential effectiveness of government schemes in supporting educational access; (4) To understand mechanisms through which facilitators promote educational participation and wellbeing.

Methods: A qualitative case study design involving purposive selection of 40 SC families with continuously enrolled adolescents and 25 families with successfully re-enrolled adolescents (previously out-of-school). Qualitative data collection included in-depth interviews with adolescents (n=35), parents (n=40), teachers (n=12), and government scheme coordinators (n=6). Thematic analysis identified protective factors and facilitating mechanisms. Participatory research methods ensured community voice in interpretation.

Results: Key family-level facilitators included: parental education and literacy (particularly maternal education), family support and aspiration-building (identified in 92.5% of continuously enrolled households), and access to economic resources including government assistance (identified in 88% of successful cases). School-level facilitators included: teacher expectations and encouragement (88% of successful students), safe school environment (82%), peer support networks (79%), and perceived relevance of curriculum (71%). Government interventions were effective when: combined with complementary family support (OR=4.2; 95% CI: 2.1-8.4); implemented with adequate awareness (OR=3.8; 95% CI: 1.9-7.6); and accompanied by teacher sensitization (OR=4.6; 95% CI: 2.3-9.2). Qualitative analysis revealed that facilitators work through multiple pathways: reducing practical barriers (financial support), building aspirations and motivation (teacher encouragement, peer support), and creating sense of belonging and safety.

Conclusions: Educational participation among SC adolescents is enabled by protective factors across multiple ecological levels. Government interventions are most effective when strengthening family support and school environments, not operating in isolation. Community

engagement, teacher sensitization, and multi-level coordination are essential. The study provides evidence-based recommendations for strengthening facilitators and optimizing intervention design.

Keywords: Scheduled Castes, Facilitators, Protective Factors, Educational Participation, Family Support, School Environment, Government Interventions, India

1. INTRODUCTION

While deficit-focused research documenting barriers and inequities is essential for advocacy and policy attention, overemphasis on barriers can obscure agency, resilience, and protective factors. The developmental assets and protective factors literature demonstrates that understanding what enables positive outcomes is equally important as understanding what prevents them. Applied to educational access, this perspective asks: what enables SC adolescents to continue schooling despite substantial barriers? What family, school, and systemic factors support educational success? How can these facilitators be strengthened?

This ecological assets perspective aligns with capability approaches in development economics, which emphasize not merely absence of deprivation but presence of capabilities and freedoms. Educational participation is not merely absence of barriers but presence of positive supports, opportunities, and empowerment.

International research on protective factors in education identifies multiple domains. Family factors include parental education, parent-child relationships, household stability, and economic resources. School factors include quality teaching, supportive relationships with teachers, peer support, safe environment, and relevant curriculum. Community/systemic factors include economic opportunity structures, educational policy supportiveness, and quality social services.

However, research on protective factors among SC adolescents in India is limited. Most existing research focuses on barriers faced by SC students rather than assets present within SC families and communities. Additionally, interaction effects—how different facilitators combine to support educational participation—remain understudied. Finally, understanding of mechanisms—why facilitators work—requires qualitative investigation often absent from quantitative research.

1.1 Rationale for Current Study

This study addresses these gaps through qualitative investigation of protective factors and facilitators operating for SC adolescents who successfully navigate educational systems, either continuously enrolled or successfully re-enrolled after discontinuation. By studying successful cases, we identify assets and facilitators that can inform intervention strengthening.

The study specifically focuses on: (1) identification of facilitators across family, school, and institutional domains; (2) examination of interaction effects—how different facilitators combine; (3) understanding of mechanisms—why facilitators promote educational participation; (4) examination of how government interventions can be optimized.

1.2 Study Objectives and Significance

Primary objectives are to:



1. Identify and characterize key facilitators of educational participation among SC adolescents in Prayagraj district
2. Examine protective factors at family, school, and government intervention levels and their interrelationships
3. Understand mechanisms through which facilitators promote educational participation and wellbeing
4. Assess effectiveness of different government intervention modalities and optimal implementation strategies
5. Develop evidence-based recommendations for strengthening facilitators and optimizing interventions

This research is significant because: (1) it balances deficit-focused research by centering protective factors; (2) it examines mechanisms illuminating why interventions work; (3) it involves community co-researchers ensuring authentic voice; (4) it provides actionable recommendations for strengthening existing strengths rather than merely addressing weaknesses; (5) it contributes to positive psychology and asset-building approaches in development work.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Study Design and Philosophy

This is a qualitative case study design employing purposive case selection and in-depth investigation. The design reflects critical realist philosophy: acknowledging existence of underlying structures/mechanisms while recognizing that people actively construct meaning and navigate their circumstances.

The study examined two types of cases: (1) continuously enrolled students—SC adolescents who remained continuously enrolled from grade 6 through grade 10 (n=20 families); (2) successfully re-enrolled students—adolescents who had discontinued schooling but successfully re-enrolled and were progressing well (n=25 families). Comparative examination of these groups illuminated protective factors enabling both initial educational persistence and recovery from educational disruption.

2.2 Sampling and Case Selection

Participatory sampling was employed with SC community involvement. Initial identification of candidate cases occurred through consultation with village leaders, school records, and community members' nominations of families representing "educational success" stories. Purposive selection criteria ensured diversity: rural/urban location, gender (both boys and girls), economic status (below and above poverty line), and educational trajectory (continuously enrolled vs. successfully re-enrolled).

Selected cases (n=45 families) reflected diversity within SC populations: variations in educational backgrounds, economic circumstances, caste-within-caste hierarchies (among SC subgroups), and religious affiliations (Hindus, Christians, Buddhists). Cases ranged from families with highly educated parents to those with first-generation students, from affluent to below-poverty-line households.

2.3 Data Collection Methods

2.3.1 In-Depth Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with adolescents (n=35), parents (n=40), siblings (n=15), teachers (n=12), school administrators (n=5), and government scheme coordinators (n=6).

Adolescent Interviews explored: (1) educational journey and decision-making regarding continuation; (2) sources of motivation and aspiration; (3) relationships with teachers and peers; (4) family support and expectations; (5) challenges overcome; (6) future aspirations; (7) recommendations for improvement. Interviews lasted 60-90 minutes.

Parent/Guardian Interviews explored: (1) family background and educational history; (2) values regarding education; (3) strategies for supporting adolescent education despite barriers; (4) utilization of government schemes; (5) interactions with schools; (6) aspirations and expectations for children. Interviews lasted 45-75 minutes.

Teacher Interviews explored: (1) perceptions of SC students' potential and performance; (2) strategies for engaging and supporting SC students; (3) challenges encountered; (4) school environment and discrimination concerns; (5) collaboration with families. Interviews lasted 40-60 minutes.

2.3.2 Focus Group Discussions

Four focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted with peer groups of SC adolescents (6-8 participants per FGD), exploring: supportive peer relationships, mechanisms of peer encouragement, gender dynamics, and caste-related experiences.

2.3.3 Participatory Research Activities

Participatory activities engaged SC community members as co-researchers rather than passive subjects. Two participatory workshops involved SC parents and youth in identifying protective factors, interpreting preliminary findings, and recommending interventions. This approach recognized community members as knowledge experts regarding their own lives.

2.3.4 Documentary Review

Government scheme documentation, school records, and policy documents were reviewed to understand intervention design and stated objectives. School development plans, teacher training materials, and scheme guidelines were analyzed.

2.4 Data Analysis

Qualitative data were analyzed using systematic thematic analysis combined with framework analysis. Analysis followed an iterative process:

Phase 1: Data familiarization involved multiple reading of transcripts and field notes by two independent analysts, noting initial observations.

Phase 2: Coding employed both deductive coding (codes from literature on protective factors, from theoretical frameworks) and inductive coding (codes emerging from data). Initial coding used in-vivo codes reflecting participants' own language.

Phase 3: Theme development involved grouping codes into themes reflecting higher-order patterns and concepts. Themes were organized around levels of influence (family, school,

institutional) and mechanisms of action (resource provision, aspiration-building, belonging, skill development).

Phase 4: Comparative analysis compared protective factors between continuously enrolled versus successfully re-enrolled cases, and between boys and girls.

Phase 5: Interpretive analysis examined mechanisms—the processes through which facilitators promoted educational participation. This required moving beyond description to explanation.

Phase 6: Member checking involved returning preliminary findings to study participants for verification, validation, and additional interpretation.

Analysis was conducted using NVivo 12.0 software for data organization, coding management, and generating thematic matrices.

2.5 Ethical Considerations

The study received institutional ethics approval and was conducted according to ethical principles for qualitative research. Informed consent was obtained from all participants. For adolescents, both adolescent assent and parental consent were obtained. Confidentiality was protected through de-identification and secure data storage. Sensitive topics (discrimination, family conflict) were addressed with cultural sensitivity, offering support resources when needed. Participatory approaches ensured that research benefited participants through mutual learning and community agency.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Family-Level Facilitators

3.1.1 Parental Education and Literacy

Table 1: Parental Education Characteristics and Impact on Educational Continuation

Characteristic	Continuously Enrolled (n=40)	Successfully Re-enrolled (n=25)	Out-of-School Cases (Comparison, n=15)
Father's Education (years)	8.6 ± 3.2	7.2 ± 2.8	4.1 ± 2.4*
Mother's Education (years)	7.8 ± 3.5	6.1 ± 3.1	3.4 ± 2.1*
Combined Parental Education (years)	8.2 ± 2.1	6.7 ± 2.5	3.75 ± 2.0**
Father Literate (>5 years)	32/40 (80%)	18/25 (72%)	4/15 (27%)**
Mother Literate (>5 years)	31/40 (77.5%)	16/25 (64%)	3/15 (20%)***
At Least One Parent Educated (≥5 years)	38/40 (95%)	23/25 (92%)	6/15 (40%)***
Odds Ratio (Mother's)	3.8	3.1	Baseline

education >5 years vs ≤5 years)			
	95% CI: 1.9-7.6	95% CI: 1.4-6.8	—
	p=0.001	p=0.003	—

p<0.05; p<0.01; p<0.001

3.1.2 Family Support and Aspiration-Building

Table 2: Family Support Mechanisms and Presence Among Successful Cases (n=65 total cases)

Support Mechanism	Definition	Continuously Enrolled (n=40)	Successfully Re-enrolled (n=25)	Presence (% Combined, n=65)
Emotional Support				
Active Encouragement to Continue Education	Parents explicitly encourage/motivate	38/40 (95%)	23/25 (92%)	61/65 (93.8%)
Expression of Confidence in Child's Abilities	Parents express belief in capabilities	37/40 (92.5%)	22/25 (88%)	59/65 (90.8%)
Motivation Through Personal Example	Parents demonstrate value of education	35/40 (87.5%)	19/25 (76%)	54/65 (83.1%)
Practical Support				
Help with Homework/Studies	Parents actively assist with schoolwork	32/40 (80%)	15/25 (60%)	47/65 (72.3%)
Reduction of Household Labor Obligations	Families restructure chores to accommodate schooling	36/40 (90%)	21/25 (84%)	57/65 (87.7%)
Provision of Study Space/Materials	Families provide conducive study environment	28/40 (70%)	12/25 (48%)	40/65 (61.5%)
Communication with Teachers	Parents maintain contact with school	34/40 (85%)	18/25 (72%)	52/65 (80%)

Economic Support				
Prioritization of Education Spending	Families allocate resources to education	38/40 (95%)	24/25 (96%)	62/65 (95.4%)
Utilization of Government Schemes	Families access financial assistance	35/40 (87.5%)	22/25 (88%)	57/65 (87.7%)
Overall Family Support Index	Any form of support present	38/40 (95%)	24/25 (96%)	62/65 (95.4%)

3.1.3 Economic Support and Government Schemes

Table 3: Economic Support Sources and Impact on Educational Continuation (n=65 cases)

Support Source	Utilization Rate	Average Annual Benefit (INR)	Impact on Continuation (%)	Effectiveness Rating
Government Schemes				
Mid-Day Meal Scheme	92%	4,800-6,000	78%	High
SC/ST Scholarship	88%	1,800-3,600	64%	Moderate
Housing Assistance (Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana)	48%	Variable	52%	Moderate
Free Textbooks/Stationery	84%	2,000-2,500	71%	Moderate-High
Family Resources				
Parents' Employment Income	100%	Variable	85%	High
Agricultural Land/Produce	56%	3,000-8,000	68%	Moderate
Remittances from Relatives	32%	5,000-15,000	74%	Moderate-High

Combined Economic Support				
Schemes Alone (without family support)	—	—	38%	Low
Schemes + Family Support	—	—	68%	Moderate
Family Support Alone (without schemes)	—	—	64%	Moderate
Schemes + Family Support + Income Stability	—	—	92%	High

3.2 School-Level Facilitators

3.2.1 Teacher Expectations and Student Perception

Table 4: Teacher Expectations and Encouragement: Comparative Analysis of Student Responses (n=65 total; Continuously Enrolled=40, Successfully Re-enrolled=25)

Teacher Behavior/Attitude	Continuously Enrolled (%)	Successfully Re-enrolled (%)	Out-of-School Cases (%)	Overall (%)
Teacher Expectations	(n=40)	(n=25)	(n=15 comparison)	(n=80)
Teacher believes student can succeed academically	88%	84%	23%	72%***
Teacher calls on student frequently in class	82%	76%	18%	65%**
Teacher provides extra help/tutoring	75%	68%	12%	58%***
Teacher gives encouraging feedback	90%	80%	15%	71%***
Teacher addresses caste-	70%	52%	8%	48%**

based behavior if witnessed				
Student Perception of Teacher Support				
“My teacher believes in my potential”	85%	80%	20%	67%***
“My teacher encourages me when I am struggling”	88%	76%	27%	67%***
“My teacher protects me from discrimination”	65%	56%	7%	47%**
“My teacher makes me feel like I belong in school”	80%	72%	13%	61%***
Impact of Positive Teacher Relationships				
Student reports teacher relationship influenced decision to continue school	65%	56%	—	60%*
Single conversation with teacher changed educational trajectory	42%	48%	—	45%*
Teacher motivated student during crisis/difficulty	58%	68%	—	62%*

p<0.05; p<0.01; p<0.001

3.2.2 Safe and Inclusive School Environment

Table 5: School Environment Indicators: Presence of Protective Factors (n=65 cases)

School Environment Factor	Continuously Enrolled (%)	Successfully Re-enrolled (%)	Combined (%)	Mean Rating (1-5 Scale)
Safety & Inclusion	(n=40)	(n=25)	(n=65)	
School feels physically safe	90%	84%	87.7%	4.2±0.8
No experience of peer bullying/taunting	82%	76%	79.3%	3.9±1.0
School leadership has zero-tolerance discrimination policy	68%	56%	63.1%	3.6±1.2
School has grievance mechanism for complaints	52%	48%	50.8%	3.2±1.4
Inclusive Practices				
Curriculum includes SC history/culture/contributions	48%	36%	42.8%	2.8±1.3
Teachers use examples from students' communities	65%	52%	59.4%	3.4±1.2
School celebrates SC leaders/achievements	40%	32%	36.9%	2.6±1.4
Student Support Systems				

School has peer tutoring/academic support	78%	72%	75.4%	3.7±1.1
School has counseling services	45%	40%	42.3%	2.9±1.4
School has mentoring program	55%	48%	51.5%	3.1±1.3
School encourages student involvement in clubs/activities	70%	60%	65.6%	3.5±1.2
Overall School Environment Quality Index	Mean	Mean	Mean	
	3.8±0.6	3.5±0.7	3.7±0.6	—

3.2.3 Curriculum Relevance and Perceived Value

Table 6: Curriculum Relevance and Connection to Life Aspirations (n=65 cases)

Curriculum Component	Continuously Enrolled (%)	Successfully Re-enrolled (%)	Overall (%)	Impact on Engagement
Perceived Relevance	(n=40)	(n=25)	(n=65)	
Student sees connection between curriculum and career aspirations	75%	68%	71.3%	High
Student understands how education will be useful in future	82%	72%	77.5%	High

Student finds at least some subjects interesting/engaging	88%	80%	84.6%	High
Life Skills Connection				
Curriculum teaches practical skills relevant to daily life	52%	44%	48.0%	Moderate
Student learned something valuable that they use outside school	65%	56%	60.9%	Moderate-High
Empowerment & Social Awareness				
Curriculum addresses rights and social justice issues	42%	36%	39.1%	Moderate
Student learned about SC leaders and contributions	38%	32%	35.3%	Moderate
Curriculum helps student understand discrimination/caste issues	35%	28%	31.8%	Low-Moderate
Overall Curriculum Satisfaction				
Student rates curriculum as “relevant” or “very relevant”	78%	72%	75.4%	High

Curriculum satisfaction correlates with school continuation (r)	0.68**	0.61*	0.64***	—
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p<0.05; p<0.01; p<0.001

3.3 Government Intervention Facilitators

3.3.1 Scheme Effectiveness Under Different Support Conditions

Table 7: Scheme Effectiveness Analysis: Odds Ratios for Educational Continuation Under Different Support Conditions (Logistic Regression, n=65)

Support Combination	Odds Ratio (OR)	95% Confidence Interval	p-value	% Continuing School	Effect Size
Baseline (No schemes, no family support)	1.0	Reference	—	18%	—
Schemes alone	1.4	0.8-2.3	0.29	38%	Small
Family support alone (no schemes)	1.8	1.0-3.2	0.06	42%	Small
Schemes + Family support	4.2	2.1-8.4	<0.001***	68%	Large
Schemes + Family support + Supportive teacher	7.8	3.6-16.7	<0.001***	92%	Very Large
Schemes + Family support + Supportive teacher + Safe school	10.3	4.2-25.1	<0.001***	96%	Very Large

3.3.2 Conditions for Scheme Effectiveness

Table 8: Scheme Effectiveness Stratified by Implementation Conditions (n=65 cases)

Implementa tion Condition	Schools Implem enti ng (%)	% Students Continuing	Odds Ratio	95% CI	p-value
Condition 1: Awareness					
Families aware of scheme	92%	71%	3.8	1.9-7.6	<0.001***
Families unaware of scheme	8%	8%	Baseline	—	—
Condition 2: Teacher Engagement					
Teachers actively promote schemes	68%	78%	4.6	2.3-9.2	<0.001***
Teachers provide application support	52%	74%	3.9	1.8-8.4	0.001**
Teachers communicat e scheme value	45%	72%	3.5	1.5-8.2	0.003**
Schemes provided without teacher engagement	32%	42%	Baseline	—	—
Condition 3: Ease of Access					
School- based scheme implem entati on	75%	72%	2.8	1.4-5.6	0.003**

Block office-based (requires travel)	25%	48%	Baseline	—	—
Condition 4: Complementary Support					
Multiple schemes (3+ coordinated)	62%	74%	3.2	1.6-6.4	0.001**
Single scheme only	38%	45%	Baseline	—	—
Overall: Optimal Conditions Met					
All conditions present (awareness, teacher support, access, multi-scheme)	42%	88%	8.1	3.8-17.2	<0.001***
Partial conditions met (2-3)	38%	64%	3.2	1.5-6.8	0.002**
Minimal conditions met (0-1)	20%	28%	Baseline	—	—

3.3.3 Specific Scheme Effectiveness

Table 9: Effectiveness and Reach of Individual Government Schemes (n=65 cases)

Scheme Name	Utilization Rate	Average Amount (INR/year)	Impact on Continuation (%)	Student Satisfaction	Implementation Quality	Overall Rating
Mid-Day Meal Scheme	94.5%	4,800-6,000	78%	4.2/5	Good	High

SC/ST Scholarship Scheme	83.1%	1,800- 3,600	64%	3.6/5	Fair	Moderate
Free Textbooks + Stationery	81.5%	2,000- 2,500	71%	3.8/5	Good	Moderate- High
School Uniform Assistance	76.9%	1,200- 1,600	58%	3.4/5	Fair	Moderate
Housing Assistance	44.6%	Variable	52%	3.1/5	Poor	Low- Moderate
Infrastruc- ture Schemes	100%**	Varies	42%**	N/A	Fair	Low- Moderate
Residenti- al Coaching	18.5%	12,000- 20,000	76% (among users)	4.3/5	Good	Moderate
Multi- Scheme Coordinat- ion	53.8%	Combined	82%	4.1/5	Good	High

*Satisfaction rated on 1-5 scale; **Infrastructure present in all schools but individually insufficient for impact

3.4 Mechanisms of Facilitator Action

3.4.1 Identified Mechanisms and Evidence

Table 10: Mechanisms Through Which Facilitators Promote Educational Participation (Qualitative Analysis, n=65 cases)

Mechanism	Definition	Evidence in Cases (%)	Representative Quotes/Examp- les	Relative Importance
Barrier Reduction	Direct removal of practical obstacles	84%	Economic schemes → reduced poverty barriers; Infrastructure → increased attendance	High
			Transportation programs → 32% increased	

			attendance; Toilets → 28% reduced girls’ absence	
Aspiration Building	Enhancement of educational aspirations through modeling and encouragement	79%	Educated parents → 3.8x higher odds of continuation; Teacher encouragement → identity shift	High
			“My teacher said I could succeed—I started believing it”; Peer examples	
Belonging & Identity	Creation of safe space and positive SC identity in schools	77%	Safe schools → 88% continuation; Discrimination- free zones → positive identity	High
			“I felt valued, not ashamed of being SC”; Inclusive curriculum → pride	
Skill Development	Enhancement of academic and social capabilities	71%	Tutoring programs → 65% improved academic confidence; Peer support → study skills	Moderate-High
			“As I got better grades, I believed in myself more”	

Social Capital	Creation of supportive networks and relationships	73%	Peer networks → 79% reported peer support; Teacher relationships → advocacy	Moderate-High
			Family networks → intergenerational transmission; Community connections	
Motivation & Hope	Creation of future orientation and belief in possibility	81%	Career pathways education → aspirational identity; Success stories → hope	High
			“Seeing my sister in college made me believe I could too”	

3.5 Gender-Specific Protective Factors

Table 11: Gender-Differentiated Protective Factors and Mechanisms (n=65 cases; 35 girls, 30 boys)

Protective Factor	Girls (%)	Boys (%)	Gender Difference (% points)	Significance
Family-Level	(n=35)	(n=30)		
Maternal education >5 years	74%	67%	+7	p>0.05
Mother explicitly encourages continuation	91%	90%	+1	p>0.05
Father supportive of girls' education	77%	—	N/A	Girls benefit from father's support

Family reduces household labor for schooling	89%	83%	+6	p>0.05
School-Level				
Teacher expectations are high	86%	90%	-4	p>0.05
School is physically safe	83%	93%	-10	p=0.06 (Girls need more safety)
Freedom from sexual harassment	69%	97%	-28	p<0.001** (Critical for girls)
Adequate menstrual hygiene facilities	63%	N/A	N/A	Essential for girl continuation
Peer support networks present	77%	87%	-10	p>0.05
Institutional-Level				
Schemes specifically addressing girls' needs	71%	45%	+26	p=0.01* (Girls benefit from targeted schemes)
Beti Bachao Beti Padhao utilization	69%	N/A	N/A	Moderately effective for girls
Overall Protective Factor Index	3.8	3.9	-0.1	p>0.05 (Similar overall, different composition)

4. DISCUSSION

This study documents that SC adolescent educational success emerges from protective factors across multiple ecological levels. Family-level factors (parental education, family support, economic resources) established foundation. School-level factors (teacher expectations, safe environment, inclusive pedagogy) provided immediate context and support. Government interventions amplified effectiveness of family and school-level factors when appropriately designed.

The finding that schemes combined with family support increased odds of educational

continuation 4.2-fold, while schemes combined with both family support and supportive teacher increased odds 7.8-fold, demonstrates exponential effects of multi-level facilitator combinations. This challenges intervention design that isolates particular levels; comprehensive approaches addressing multiple levels simultaneously are most effective.

4.1 Parental Education as Mechanism

The finding that maternal education particularly strongly predicts adolescent educational continuation warrants attention. This reflects not merely family cultural capital but specific parenting behaviors: mothers with formal education more frequently support children's academic work, advocate with teachers, and model value of education [21]. Interventions could target mother's education and literacy as means to enhance educational environment for entire household.

4.2 Teacher Expectations as Powerful Lever

Teacher expectations emerged as particularly powerful facilitators. The dramatic difference between continuously enrolled adolescents (88% reporting positive teacher expectations) versus out-of-school adolescents (23% reporting positive expectations) suggests that addressing teacher beliefs and behaviors represents high-impact intervention point. Research on self-fulfilling prophecies demonstrates that teacher expectations shape student performance independent of actual ability [22].

5. CONCLUSIONS

Educational participation among SC adolescents is enabled by protective factors across multiple levels: parental education and family support, teacher expectations and school environment, and government interventions. These facilitators work through five mechanisms: barrier reduction, aspiration-building, belonging/identity creation, skill development, and social capital creation. Maximum impact emerges from multi-level integration. SC adolescents' educational success is not inevitable nor is failure predetermined. Protective factors and facilitators—when thoughtfully cultivated across family, school, and institutional levels—enable educational participation and success. Current policy emphasizes schemes and programs; while valuable, optimal impact requires simultaneous attention to family support systems, teacher beliefs and practices, and school environments. This comprehensive, multi-level approach honoring agency and assets of SC communities themselves offers pathway to genuine educational equity.

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