

Problems of Tribal Education in India : An Analysis

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ABSTRACT

India is a land of large variety of indigenous people. The Scheduled Tribe population represents one of the most economically impoverished and marginalized groups in India. With a population of more than 10.2 crores, India has the single largest tribal population in the world. This constitutes 8.6 per cent of the total population of the country. Education is one of the primary agents of transformation towards development. Education is in fact, an input not only for economic development of tribes but also for inner strength of the tribal communities which helps them in meeting the new challenges of life. It is an activity, or a series of activities, or a process which may either improve the immediate living conditions or increase the potential for future living. Education is an input not only for economic development of tribes but also for inner strength of the tribal communities which helps them in meeting the new challenges of life. This article is an attempt to analyse the problems of tribals education in India.

Introduction :

India is a land of large variety of indigenous people. The Scheduled Tribe population represents one of the most economically impoverished and marginalized groups in India. With a population of more than 10.2 crores, India has the single largest tribal population in the world. This constitutes 8.6 per cent of the total population of the country. Education is one of the primary agents of transformation towards development. Education is in fact, an input not only for economic development of tribes but also for inner strength of the tribal communities which helps them in meeting the new challenges of life. It is an activity, or a series of activities, or a process which may either improve the immediate living conditions or increase the potential for future living. Education is an input not only for economic development of tribes but also for inner strength of the tribal communities which helps them in meeting the new challenges of life. Literacy and educational attainment are powerful indicators of social and economic development among the backward groups in India. Despite the sincere and concerted efforts by the government for the overall development of the scheduled tribes, they are still far behind in almost all the standard parameters of development. This is mainly due to the high incidence of illiteracy and very low level of education among the tribal people. It is well known that the educational background of tribes is very discouraging as compared to the rest of the population. So, education is an important avenue for upgrading the economic and social conditions of the Scheduled Tribes. In this background the objective of this paper is to focus on various govt measures and different challenges of tribal education in India.

Who are scheduled tribes ?

The constitution of India in Article 366 has defined the scheduled Tribes as such of those tribes or tribal communities which have been so declared by the constitutional order under Article 342 for the purpose of the constitution. There are 574 tribal groups who have been identified as scheduled tribes. They have been previously described as aborigines, aboriginals, primitives, adivasis, vanjatis etc. Special provisions have been made in Articles 46, 275, 330, 332, 335, 338, 340 etc to safeguard the interests of scheduled tribes and to protect them from social injustice and exploitation.

Problems of Tribal Education in India:

There are many critical issues and problems in the field of tribal education. They are as follows:

Attitude of Other Students: Attitude of other student is one of the important factors for the promotion of tribal student's higher education i.e., environment factor is one of the crucial factors for the development. The negative attitude we can reflected in university and other higher educational centre mainly located in big cities.

Social Factors: More allocation of funds and opening of schools do not go far in providing education to the tribals. Formal education has not been necessary for the members of tribal societies to discharge their social obligations. Hence they should be prepared to accept education and it should be presented to them in such a way as to cut the barriers of superstition and prejudice. There is still a widespread feeling among the tribals that education makes their boys defiant and insolent and alienates them from the rest of their society, while the girls turn modern or go astray. Since some of their educated boys felt alienated and cut off their bonds with their families and villages after getting education and good employment. Some of the tribal groups vehemently oppose the spread of education in their midst. Besides, some of their superstitions and myths also play their part. Some tribal groups believe that their gods shall be angry if they send their children to schools run by 'outsiders'.

Economic Factors: Some economic factors too are responsible for lack of interest shown by the tribal people in getting education. Since most of the tribal people are living in poverty, it is not easy for most of them to send their children to schools.

Lack of Interest in Formal Education: In many states tribal children are taught through the same books which form the curriculum of non-tribal children of the urban and rural areas of the rest of the state. Obviously, the content of such books rarely appeals to the tribal children who come from different cultural backgrounds. Under the traditional tribal set up a child enters adulthood with confidence. He knows his environment thoroughly, knows how to construct his own house, cultivate his field, weave his cloth; in short he acquires all the skills to lead a reasonably comfortable life within the limitations of his culture. The simple skill of reading and writing acquired in an over formal school is no match for this. We cannot afford to push him back to his environment naked. Therefore, a curriculum should be framed in the welfare of tribal people. Certain tribal activities like agriculture, dancing, hunting, tribal games and archery must be allowed to find fullest expression in the extra-curricular activities of the school, thus providing some continuity of the traditional values and forms of organization. A scheme is to be worked out through which the school children will be able to link up the school and the teacher with their parents and the tribal activities. The school has to act as a centre of dispersal of simple technical know-how beyond the skills of reading and writing to become an effective agent of social change. This student-teacher-parent continuum should be able to generate a congenial atmosphere, so that the broad purpose of education, which is to enable an average citizen to comprehend the social, political, economic and other processes and forces around him, is fully served.

Suitable Teachers: Lack of suitable teachers is one of the major reasons for the slow growth of education in tribal areas. Most of the teachers employed for imparting education to the tribal children show little appreciation of tribal way of life and value system. They approach tribal people with a sense of superiority and treat them as 'savage and uncivilized' and hence fail to establish proper rapport with their students. The Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes Commission's report says that a teacher in the tribal areas must have a thorough knowledge of tribal life and culture. He must speak tribal language. Only so can he be in a position to act as a friend, philosopher and guide to the tribal people. Actually the gulf between teachers and taught can be best reduced by appointing teachers from the tribal community itself or a separate cadre of teachers for tribal areas, with some inducements, should be created to serve the educational needs of the tribal society.

Lack of Facilities: One of the major problems in tribal education is that of language. Most of the tribal languages and dialects are in the most rudimentary stage and there is hardly any written literature. Most of the states impart education to tribal and non-tribal children alike through the medium of the regional language, which makes the education uninteresting and also hurts tribal sentiments.

Nature of habitat: Most of the tribal villages are scattered. This entails long travels to attend schools. Unless the school is situated very close to their villages and its site approved by the local people the result shall not be encouraging. School building also plays an important role in the growth of education among the tribal folk. Due to mismanagement, bungling and sometimes financial constraints, the building and sometimes financial constraints, the building is seldom suitable to run an educational institution.

Number of teachers: Most of the primary schools run in the tribal areas are "Single teacher-managed whose presence in the school is more an exception than a rule". The enthusiasm of tribal people in the education of their children also depends considerably on the timing of school hours in different seasons. It should not clash with their important socio-economic activities.

To many observers of the situation, the problem of education in tribal areas is the problem of wastage. It is not that wastage and stagnation are peculiar to the tribal communities alone but the extent of wastage is much larger in their case. The problem of absenteeism is a serious one in tribal areas. One sees a large number of students on the rolls but the actual attendance is really low, and the number of students passing out at the final examination is even lower. The real problem is to create such economic conditions as could be conducive to the students developing sufficient interest in their studies. Education being the most effective instrument of empowering the Socially Disadvantaged Groups, all out efforts should be made to improve the educational status of these groups, especially that of the women and the Girl Child. In fact, the educational backwardness, prevalent amongst these people, necessitates an added thrust on their education, training and skill up gradation, as it will bring forth not only social empowerment but also economic empowerment.

Environment of family: Surrounding or environments is one of the important factors influence for the development of a person generally and particularly in educational development. Most of the tribal parents are agriculturists and labourers; they have little knowledge relating to modern world and modern environment. Their environment narrows that created narrow mentality. And most of tribal fathers are addicts to alcoholic and other beverage items that creating some problem in mentally and economically end result students will fail exams.

Communication: Communication one of the key factor affecting the development of tribal education. Due to isolation tribal facing problem for expressing modern and regional languages. For understanding tribal language very difficult generally in the case of society and particularly in teachers. So the students facing problem for discussing their doubt with teachers. So their doubt continuing and automatically tribal students became the last in the class.

Cooperation from Stake Holders: Cooperation is essential for promoting education in the case of tribal students. Their funds are flowing a number of persons hand and at last that amount will get students hands. The delay of funds creating problem, so the respective authorities need to be responsible for providing funds at right time at right hand. And at last but not least the success of tribal education is completed only after getting the cooperation and help from their classmates.

Drop-out among tribal students: Dropout is a major problem among tribals which creates a key barrier in the way of education. A number of factors are responsible for this dropout. These are:

Low socio-economic status: - Tribals enjoy low socio-economic status. Miller has identified four major classes of variables such as cognitive variables, physical variables and motivational variables where disadvantaged learners show poor performance as compared with the advantaged groups.

Tribal concepts of pleasure: - Tribals are giving more importance for their pleasure such as dance, music and other types of entertainments prevalent in the society.

Existence of ethnic stereotypes: - Stereo typing is a natural and inevitable. It helps us to organize life. But such typing turns in to prejudice or stereotypes when based on little facts and it is used as a mechanism to establish the myth of racial or cultural superiority.

Tribal concept of learning: - In most of the tribal cultures learning is an active pleasurable event mostly carried on among peers. But the existing system of education does not take in to account their learning style.

Linguistic problems: - Tribal languages, except a very few, belong to Austro-Asiatic language family and are different from dominant non tribal languages of India which belong either to the Indo European or the Dravidian family. In most of the time tribals face acute problems in language.

Problem of learning English: - Tribals need for English is great, they face problems in learning than their non-tribal counterparts. For tribals their typical use of regional languages interferes with English. For them English are 5th or 6th languages.

Problems in learning to read: - Tribals have long oral tradition. Their culture is oral. Their history, myths and traditions are orally handed down from generation to generation. Most of the language does not have scripts of their own; their oral tradition still continues to exist.

Psychological problems: - Financial problems of the tribals always make the tribals in a very depressed condition. They have lots of wants and but the means to satisfying them is very less. It leads to many psychological.

Academic and administrative problems: - Even though the number of programmes for the upliftment of tribal education is many, the percentage of people receiving these benefits is very less. Administrative authorities are always showing very neutral attitude towards the education of the tribals.

Indifferent attitude of tribal parents: - Tribal parents are mostly illiterate. They always show a very indifferent attitude towards the education of their children. They are interested in providing household responsibilities to their children a very early stage of their education. "The parents of these students do not have any relationship with the society outside and are unaware of the importance of education. All teachers are talented. Teaching such children is a herculean task".

Indifferent attitude of tribal teachers: Teachers do not take much effort to improve the educational level of the tribal students. Lack of communication, high level of absenteeism in the class, bad result in study, lack of attention in classroom by the tribals are some of the factors that has increased the indifferent attitude of the teachers towards the tribal students.

Indifferent attitude of tribal students: Students clearly said don't like someone forcing me to get up early in the morning. So, I was unhappy to go to school... Subjects like Malayalam and Science are good for me, but, English, Hindi and Mathematics are very tough. I could not follow English and Hindi classes. Whenever I commit mistakes, in front of others, teachers used to scold me, beat and pinch my ears. You ask others; almost 90% of the children have similar experiences. See, their beating caused swelling on my legs. Moreover, the staffs ridicule us by calling ,adivasi Fed up with all these, my two friends and I decided to run away from the school. One day, we climbed on the compound wall and got on to the branch of a tree outside that was almost touching the compound wall, climbed down, and somehow or other managed to reach our settlement",

In addition to all the above causes some other causes can also be cited as the background for the reasons for Drop-out. They are:

- Extreme level of poverty, deprivation and vulnerability
- High levels of exclusion, developmental, social and economic
- Extremely low level of empowerment-political, social and economic
- Low level of access to entitlement
- Practically zero participation in development matters with no autonomy in any form of decision-making
- Poor human development with low level of literacy and access to health care

Rapid alienation of assets like land

Alarming depletion of social capital especially traditional forms of organization and leadership.

Quick deterioration of traditional knowledge system and cultural attainment.

Fast increasing tendency to use tribal people as 'cat's-paws' in criminal activities like illicit distillation, cultivation of narcotic plants, stealing of forest wealth etc.

Dependency-inducing developmental programmes relying on distribution of benefits rather than building up of capabilities.

Implementation of ad hoc and stereotyped developmental programmes in the absence of proper planning.

Weak delivery system of public services.

Very weak monitoring system.

High level of exploitation of women by out-side

Change in curriculum would remain incomplete unless patterns of teacher-student interaction also change in the direction of coercion-free involvement of the ST students. The knowledge of social reality that teachers bring to the classroom, and their perception of the role of education are among the key determinants of teacher's behavior. To a great extent, the norms of teacher-student interaction are shaped by the training that teachers receive prior to employment. Knowledge of social reality and role of education under prevailing social conditions do form a part of present training curricula, but like much else in teacher training, these segments receive a ritualistic observance. Teachers cannot be oriented towards new types of classroom interactions without being exposed to specific issues of social reality and functioning of school.

Government Efforts for Tribal Education in India:

Starting from the First Five Year Plan Period (1951-1956) the government is steadily allocating financial resources for the purpose of tribal development. Towards the end of the plan (1954), 43 Special Multipurpose Tribal Development Projects (MTDPs) were created. During the Third Five Year Plan Period (1961-1966), the government of India adopted the strategy of converting areas with more than 66 per cent tribal concentration into Tribal Development Blocks (TBDs). By the end of Fourth Five Year Plan (1969-1974), the number of TBDs in the country rose to 504. Additionally, in 1972 the Tribal Sub Plan Strategy (TSP) was implemented by the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare. TSP was based on twin objectives of socioeconomic development and protection against exploitation. It was generally implemented in the areas where the Scheduled Tribe population was more than 50 per cent of the total population.

The PESA (The Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 in fact, has made it mandatory for the States having scheduled areas to make specific provisions for giving wide-ranging powers to the tribes on the matters relating to decision-making and development of their community. A centrally-sponsored government scheme of ashram schools exclusively for ST children from elementary to higher secondary levels was initiated in the 1970s. But the poor quality of education in ashram schools, however, has undermined confidence in education as a vehicle for social mobility.

The Janshala Programme is a collaborative effort of the Government of India (GOI) and five UN Agencies – UNDP, UNICEF, UNESCO, ILO and UNFPA – a community based primary education programme, aims to make primary education more accessible and effective, especially for girls and children in deprived communities, marginalised groups, Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribes/minorities, children with specific needs.

Suggestions:

Education is the most effective instrument for ensuring equality of opportunity; keeping in view of this assumption the Government has been making several efforts to education by extending special educational

facilities and reservation of seat in educational institutions. But the development of education is one of the important problems in the case of tribals. For solving that problem a number of suggestions may be taken.

1. Proper awareness campaign should be organized to create the awareness and the importance of education.
2. Educated tribal youth should be recruited as a teacher and posted in tribal areas.
3. The attitude of the tribal parents toward education should be improved through proper counseling and guidance.
4. Teacher buildup and maintain close relationship for the development of tribal students.
5. Vocational institutes should be implemented for the tribal students for creation of new avenues.
6. Administration of incentives need to be streamlined so that the students may avail all the facilities at proper time.
7. Higher level officials should check the functioning of schools frequently relating to the teaching methods, working hours, days of the school and attendance registers.
8. Establish separate residential school for each districts and extended up to PG level.
9. Residential facilities with all amenities should be provided to teachers and other staffs.
10. Merits scholarship, attendance scholarship, and more incentives in the form of grant allocated to uniform, books, learning materials, midday meals, supply of sports equipments.

Conclusion

The spread of education among the ST during the last four decade has been quite uneven. Ignorant and illiteracy among tribals should be minimized and rooted out, by providing proper education and awareness programme. Government should make available adequate grants for education of tribal. To improve the educational and economic status of the tribal, opportunities for basic and adult education with training leading to better employment should be provided. Hostel facilities to tribal students should be surveyed and improved. Tribal welfare department may design and launch new programmes to generate employment opportunities for tribals. The Director of Employment and Training may provide effective career guidance service to the tribal students so as to help them to make a self assessment of these abilities, aptitudes and plan for the career ensuring of high quality education to tribal students. Pre-primary education and residential education will be strengthened further. The existing tuition scheme will be modified to cater to the needs of all tribal students. Programmes for assisting dropouts and improving enrolment will be formulated. All Houseless families will be given houses in a phased manner. The rate of Scholarships will be revised frequently. High priority for the completion of pre-metric hostels and improving of their infrastructure facilities and revision of mess charges etc. Massive awareness and literacy programmes with involvement of NGOs will be organized in the tribal areas. Programmes aimed at improving the brilliance of talented ST students will be formulated and implemented. Training programmes such as IT Training will be arranged for the tribal students and programmes for ensuring jobs for tribals in the IT sector will be formulated. For applying schemes at right time, right place and right manner the government and respective authorities' cooperation. And at last but most for developing education in tribal communities the balanced relationship between other students and teachers is essentials.

Education is the key to tribal development. Tribal children have very low levels of participation. Though the development of the tribes is taking place in India, but the pace of development has been rather slow. If govt. will not take some drastic steps for the development of tribal education, the status of education among tribes will be a story of distress, despair and death. Hence time has come to think it seriously about tribal education and inclusive growth. So, there is an urgent need for various govt. interventions, planners and Education policy makers to address this problem and allocate more funds in the central and state budgets for tribal education. Easy access and more opportunities should be provided to the tribal children in order to bring them to the mainstream of economic development. The need for higher education and training is a fact. Education in the modern world is not only a process of learning and becoming wise but also a tool at one's command to survive in this age of competition. So why tribals should not get it? If govt, NGOs, civil society, masses, intellectuals and above all tribal people will be conscious of their rights, then tribal education will not become a dream but a reality.

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