



Research Paper

A Brief Review on Tribal Education in India

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I. INTRODUCTION

The term 'tribe' is derived from the Latin word 'tribes', meaning the 'poor or the masses'. In English language the word 'tribe' appeared in the sixteenth century and denoted a community of persons claiming descent from a common ancestor. The word 'tribe' is generally used for a socially cohesive unit, associated with a territory, the member of which regards them as politically autonomous. Often a tribe possesses a distinct dialect and distinct cultural traits.

Concept and Definition of Tribe: There is no exact definition or the criteria for considering a tribe as a human group. However researchers defined it in various forms at different times. Sometimes they called "Tribe" as "aboriginal" or "depressed classes" or "Adivasees".

According to **the Imperial Gazetteer of India**, "a tribe is a collection of families bearing a common name, speaking a common dialect, occupying or professing to occupy a common territory and is not usually endogamous, though originally it might have been so".

As per the definition of **Oxford Dictionary** "A tribe is a group of people in a primitive or barbarous stage of development acknowledging the authority of a chief and usually regarding themselves as having a common ancestor".

D.N. Majumdar defines tribe as "a social group with territorial affiliation, endogamous with no specialization of functions ruled by tribal officers hereditary or otherwise, united in language or dialect recognizing social distance with other tribes or castes".

As per **Ralph Linton** "Tribe may be a group of bands occupying a contiguous territory or territories and having a feeling or sense of unity deriving from numerous similarities in a culture, frequent contacts and a certain community of interests".

According to R.N. Mukherjee, "a tribe is that human group, whose members have common interest, territory, language, social law and economic occupation".

Tribe can be defined as a "collection of families bearing a common name, speaking a common dialect, occupying or professing to occupy a common territory and is not usually endogamous though originally it might have been so".

India is a home to a large variety of indigenous people. The Scheduled Tribe population represents one of the most economically destitute and marginalized groups in India. There are

about 550 tribes in India. As per 1951 census, 5.6% of the total population of the country was tribal while at present according to the census of 2011, the number of scheduled tribes in India is 10,42,81,034. It is 8.6% of the total population of India. A total of 9,38,19,162 people belonging to scheduled tribes reside in rural areas whereas 1,04,61,872 people in urban areas. India has the single largest tribal population in the world. This constitutes 8.6 per cent of the total population of the country (Census of India, 2011).

Education is a process of controlling the behaviour of an individual. Education is one of the most important means to improve the personal endowments, build capabilities, overcome constraints and in the process, enlarge available set of opportunities and choices for a sustained improvement in well-being. The process of education and attainments thereof has an impact on all aspects of life. It is a critical invasive instrument for bringing about social, economic and political inclusion of people. Education can be used as a tool to empower the individual. Through child centered learning, students are able to see their own role in

transformation. Societal change comes from the collective transformation of the individuals within that society. The relationship between education and social change takes a dual form-education as an instrument and education as a product. Education is one of the primary agents of transformation towards development.

This means that education as a tool which is used as a means for bringing about desired changes in the society and in the later on case changes in the educational structure follows as a consequence of changes which have already taken place in the society. Education is an significant parameter for any comprehensive growth in an economy and it is an central avenue for improvement the economic and social setting of the Scheduled Tribes. Literacy and educational accomplishments is influential sign of social and economic development among the backward groups. The male female gap in literacy and educational attainment among the scheduled tribes is significant. Scheduled Tribes are geographically, socially isolated and economically marginalized communities. In the post-Independence period, sincere and concerted efforts were made for the economic and educational development of tribal. Notwithstanding of these efforts the performance of the tribes in education is still much lower than the Scheduled Castes. This has front to drop outs and directly impacted their overall educational status.

Demographical Status of Tribal Population in India

The tribal population constitutes a majority in the northeastern states of Mizoram and Lakshadweep (94.4 per cent), Meghalaya (86.1per cent), and Nagaland (86.5per cent). The states with no Scheduled tribe groups are Punjab, Chandigarh, Haryana, Delhi and Pondicherry. India has total tribal population of 10.46 corers (Table-1) which is 8.6 per cent of total population of India as per 2011 census.

While in table-2 illustrates about the percentage of tribal population since 1961 to 2011 in total population of India. As per the Census of India, 2011 during 2001 and 2011, the decadal change in the scheduled tribe urban population is 23.7 per cent where as it is 49.7 per cent in urban area and 21.3 per cent in rural area. The urban India has only 2.8 per cent ST population but Rural India has 11.3 per cent ST population.

Table

Population of Schedule Tribes in India: 1961-2011					
S.NO	Census Year	Population (in Total	Rural	Urban	Percentage
1	1961	3,01,30,184	2,93,57,790	7,72,394	6.9
2	1971	3,80,15,162	3,67,20,681	12,94,481	6.9
3	1981	5,16,28,638	4,84,27,604	32,01,034	7.6
4	1991	6,77,58,380	6,27,51,026	50,07,354	8.1
5	2001	8,43,26,978	7,73,39,335	69,87,643	8.2
6	2011	10,42,81,034	9,38,19,162	1,04,61,872	8.6

Source - Census of India, 2011

Literacy Trends among Tribes in India

Literacy rate is one of the most popular and important way to measure the percentage of literates among the population. It is an important indicator of development among tribal groups. The trend of literacy of tribes in India is shown in table-3. The percentage of literacy of tribes was only 8.54 per cent in 1961 which has increased to 63.1 per cent in 2011. But female literacy of tribes is only 54.4 per cent compared to male literacy of 71.7 per cent. During the post- Independence period, the Indian government implemented legislation and allocated funds to facilitate access to enrollment in primary education in India. As a result, both literacy rates and gross enrollment ratios of boys and girls across the general population have increased substantially during the past 50 years

Problems of Tribal Education

Despite constitutional provisions and safe guard with various government initiatives and programme, educating tribal children is still a major concern for the government. There are so many socio-cultural, economical, geographical, and administrative obstacle for which literacy rate of tribal people has never been at par with entire population, and gap between them is always high, for example the gap between tribals and whole population in literacy rate was 19.7% in 1961 which increased to 21.6% in 1991 and has declined to 14.3% in 2011.

If we analyze the real issues of tribal population for taking education then we must find that there is higher concentration of poverty among the tribal population in both the rural as well as urban areas. Their weak resource base, their low position in socio-economic and political hierarchy, illiteracy, their relative lack of access to facilities provided by developmental measures; and their inadequate participation in institutions are mainly responsible for their backwardness as well as access to education. It is indeed a matter of deep concern that why the fruits of development fail to reach the weaker sections of our society despite our planned efforts. However, the contemporary challenges faced by the tribal people in order to acquire education are as follows.

1. Medium of language: In most of the states, official/regional languages are used for class room teaching and these are not understood by the tribal children at primary level. For them these languages seem to be a foreign tongue as they speak only in their mother tongue. Language is one of the important constraints of tribal children which prevents them access to education.

2. The Location of the Village: The physical barrier creates a hindrance for the children of a tribal village to attend the school in a neighboring village.

3. Economic Condition: Most of the tribal community is economically backward. It is very difficult for them to fulfill their basic needs. Sending their children to school is much like a luxury to them. They prefer to send their children to work to supplement the family income. Reluctance of parents towards education: Illiteracy of parents and their attitude towards education is indifferent, as well as their community never encourages the pupils to pursue study. Besides this parents are not willing to send their daughters to co-educational institutions. The economic condition of tribal people is so poor that they do not desire to spare their children or their labour power and allow them to attend schools.

4. Attitude of the parents: As education does not yield any immediate economic return, the tribal parents prefer to engage their children in remunerative employment which supplements the family income.

5. Teacher Related Problems: Irregularity of the teachers in school fail to establish Communication Bridge among the tribal students besides inadequacy of trained teachers is a big problem in imparting education to tribal children. In the remote tribal areas the teacher absenteeism is a regular phenomenon and this affects largely the quality of education.

6. Infrastructural challenges: Most of the schools located in tribal areas have minimal infrastructural facilities. These schools are not equipped with teaching learning materials, study materials, even minimum sanitary provisions are not maintained. Lack of communication plays pivotal role in discouraging tribal children to come to school regularly.

7. Lack of proper monitoring: Proper monitoring is hindered by poor coordination between the Tribal Welfare Department and School Education Department.

Government Policies and Programmes for Tribal Education

The importance of education as an agency of modernization as well as a source of employment has long been realised in our national plans for tribal welfare. A greater proportion of the grant both from state and central sectors have been invested in imparting education at primary, pre-matric, and post-matric levels. However, the wastage and drop-outs in tribal education have been equally stupendous. Owing to this, the desired benefits have been drawn only by such sections of the tribes who were prepared to take advantage from this programme.

A) Post- Matric Scholarship for Scheduled Tribe Students: This scheme was introduced to encourage the ST students pursuing Post- Matriculation, in professional, technical as well as non-professional courses in various recognized institution by providing them financial support. Students having family income not more than Rs.1,0800 per year, are entitled for this scheme. This scheme is in operation since 1944-1945, and implemented by state government and UTs administration with 100% central assistance. Hostel for ST students girls' and boys': A plan for providing hostel accommodation for ST girls'' was started during third five years plan period and for the boys'' this programme was launched in 1989-1990 and both these schemes merged in 10th five year plan. Aim of this scheme is to facilitate hostel accommodation to the peripheral ST students who are unable to pursue their education due to their financial condition and location of their residence.

B) Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship Scheme (RGNF): RGNF was introduced in the year 2005-2006 with the objective to encourage the students belonging to ST community to pursue higher education such as M.Phil and Ph.D by providing them financial assistance. University Grant Commission (UGC) took the responsibility to implement this scheme on the behalf of Ministry of Tribal Affairs.

C) Vocational Training Center in Tribal Areas: Aim of this scheme is to develop the skill of ST students depending on their qualification and present market trends. This vocational training would enable them to get suitable employment or enable them to become self sufficient.

D) National Overseas Scholarship Scheme for ST:

This scheme provides financial support to those meritorious tribal students who wish to pursue their studies in abroad (Masters, Doctorate, Post-Doctorate) in specified field of Engineering, Technology, and Science.

E) Scheme of Top Class Education for ST Students: A scheme of scholarship was introduced by Ministry of Tribal affairs in 2007-2008 to encourage brilliant students of tribal community for continuing their study at degree or post-degree level.

F) Ashram School in Tribal Sub-Plan Area: This scheme was started in 1990-1991 with a view to provide education with residential facility to ST students. Tribal Research Institute: Fourteen Tribal Research Institutes (TRIs) have been set up in Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Manipur and Tripura. Book Bank: In order to reduce

dropout rate among ST students from professional institutes/ universities, funds are allotted for purchase of books under this scheme.

G) Coaching for ST: Under this scheme free coaching classes are provided to ST students to enhance their skill and capabilities for various competitive examinations, so that they can compete with main stream students in all competitive examinations.

H) Establishments of new Eklavya Model School: Central government has announced on 6 December, 2019 announced that 400 Eklavya Model residential schools will be setup across the nation's tribal belts by as soon as 2022. In this context it is underlined that network of Eklavya Model schools are being built to provide students from tribal areas access to modern sports facilities.

II. 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 I like to express some suggestions.

1. Literacy campaign - Proper awareness campaign should be organized to create the awareness about the importance of education. Extensive literacy campaign in the tribal dominated districts may be undertaken on a priority basis to literate the tribal.

2. Attitude of the tribal parents - The attitude of the tribal parents toward education should be improved through proper counseling and guidance.

3. Relevant study materials in local languages - All study materials should be supplied in local languages of tribes.

4. Appointment of Local teachers and female teachers - It is suggested to appoint more tribal teachers and female teachers in the tribal areas. The ecological, cultural, psychological characteristics of tribal children should be considered carefully by the teachers in tribal areas.

5. Stipends and various scholarships - Since higher education among the tribes is less, special ST scholarships should be provided to the tribal students perusing higher education, particularly in medical, engineering, and other vocational streams.

6. Residential schools - More residential schools should be established in each states and districts and extended up to PG level in tribal areas.

7. Social security- Social security of students, especially of adolescent girls is of great concern in residential schools.

8. Proper Monitoring - Higher level officials should check the functioning of schools frequently relating to the teaching methods, working hours, and attendance registers.

III. CONCLUSION

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 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.

Easy access and more opportunities should be provided to the tribal children in order to bring them to the mainstream of economic development. Education, especially in its elementary form, is considered of utmost importance to the tribal's because it's crucial for total development of tribal communities and is particularly helpful to build confidence among the tribes to deal with outsiders on equal terms. 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. They are not able to participate in the process of development, as they are not aware of most of the programmes and policies made for their upliftment.

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