



Tribal Education: Challenges And Ongoing Measures A Critical Analysis

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Abstract: Tribal education is one of the most emerging policy issues in contemporary India because of so many reasons behind for development of tribal education, among them deprivation and illiteracy major one. Their educational status has been seen as very poor and worst because of the isolation, inaccessible lack of communication facilities, poor health conditions, hostile environment, poor economic conditions, and superstitious beliefs. Tribal deserve special development measures to enhance their quality of life. This paper focuses on the current status of tribal education, highlighting challenges and ongoing measures undertaken by the Central Government and regional government to make the life of tribes better and sustainable in a given situation. Also, in this paper, an attempt has been made to analyze the causes of poor educational status of tribal students, to find out the suggestive measures for further improvement in tribal literacy rate and also makes different admirable recommendations to overcome barriers like Guidance and counseling centers should be set up for tribal students, Monitoring of the programmer should be done at the grass-root level through village education committee, etc.

Keywords: Tribal Education, Challenges, Ongoing Measures

Introduction

Odisha is also known as the land of many tribes but still bears the tag of being underdeveloped, so the tribal education is concerned with various issues and essential to be replete without readdressed of these issues and concerned, the strategies that were planned and invented will never work. Thus, adequate educational opportunities are essential to develop and increase their level of aspiration and motivate them to participate in mainstream education and make them aware of their program of development as well as the initiatives made by the government for their development. India is also known as a place for rich, glorious heritage, but a sizable part of the Indian population is yet to benefit from it. It includes the tribal communities, which are primitives and live secluded (Verma, 1996). The Imperial Gazetteer of India, 1911 defines a tribe 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” (Nithya 2014). According to D.N. Majumdar, “A tribe is a social group with territorial afflation, endogamous with no specialization of functions, rule by

tribal officers, hereditary or otherwise united in language and dialect, recognizing social distance with other tribes or caste without any social obloquy attaching to them, as it does in the caste structure, following tribal traditions, beliefs and customs, illiberal of naturalization of ideas, from alien sources, The tribes of India constitute an important segment of Indian society. Under Article 342 of the Constitution, the tribals of India are designated as Anusuchit Janjati (Scheduled Tribes). As per the census report 2011, 705 types of tribal communities are living in India. Odisha State is endowed with the highest tribal population in India. A total number of 62 tribes, including 13 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG), reside here. Out of the total population in Odisha, 22 percent belongs to the tribal population.

Generally speaking, most of them are at subsistence level and the percentage of households below the poverty line (BPL) is the highest among scheduled tribes compared to other social groups. Their literacy level is very low. A cursory glance at the educational status of the tribal children of Odisha reveals that the absolute majority of them are non-enrolled, a large number are out of school and the dropout rate is high. As per the 2011 census literacy rate of the Odisha tribal population is 45.4%(female 44.6% and male 55.5). The result of dropout has drastically fallen over the past decade. The dropout rate declined from 41.80% in 2000-01 to 2.83% in 2009-10 at the primary level. The dropout rates of girls fell from 41.40% to 3.10% and the dropout rate of boys fell from 42.30% to 2.57% over the 2001-2011 period.

Importance of Education for the Tribal Children

Education is needed for the people in under-developed societies because it brings socio-economic development. It creates awareness, changes attitudes, changes occupations and many others. In the post-independence period, a series of steps have been taken for promoting education among the people of the tribal community; still, there is a lacuna behind the result of which a significant number of boys and girls have come out of their cocoon of darkness and Ignorance and shown positive signs to educate themselves. However, they still have miles to go to reach universalization in each phase and stage of education. (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2018)

Objectives

- To find out the ongoing measures taken by the Government of Odisha to promote tribal education.
- To explore the causes of poor educational status of tribal students
- To find out the suggestive measures for further improving the tribal literacy rate.

Concurrent Programs and Schemes for Promoting Tribal Education

Article 46 of the Constitution states, "The State shall promote, with special care, the education and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and, in particular of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of social exploitation ."Articles 330, 332, 335, 338 to 342 and the entire Fifth and Sixth Schedules of the Constitution deal with special provisions for implementing the objectives outlined in Article 46. **Some of the steps taken by the Government of India are**

According to the National Policy on Education -1986 and the Programme of Action (POA) - 1992, the following special provisions for SCs and STs have been incorporated into the existing schemes.

0. Relaxed norms for opening primary/middle schools; a primary school within one km walking distance from habitations of the population up to 200 instead of habitations of up to 300 population.

1. Abolition of the tuition fee in all States in Government Schools at least up to the upper primary level. Most states have abolished tuition fees for SC/ST students up to the senior secondary level.
2. Incentives like free textbooks, uniforms, stationery, schools bags, etc., for these students.
3. The **Constitutional (86th Amendment) Bill**, notified on 13 December 2002, provides for free and compulsory elementary education as a Fundamental Right for all children aged 6-14 years.
4. **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)**: is a historic stride towards achieving the long-cherished goal of Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) through a time-bound integrated approach in partnership with States. SSA, which promises to change the face of the elementary education sector of the country, aims to provide good and quality elementary education to all children in the 6-14 age group by 2010.

The main features of the program are:

Focus on girls, especially those belonging to SC/ST communities and minority groups.

1. Back to the school campus for out-of-school girls.
2. Free textbooks for girls.
3. Special coaching remedial classes for girls and a congenial learning environment.
4. Teachers' sensitization programs promote equitable learning opportunities.
5. Special focus on innovative projects related to girls' education.
6. Recruitment of 50 percent female teachers.

Despite the above provisions, Right to Education(RTE), Act-2009 has a major role in promoting tribal education in Odisha.

Some of the provisions of this Act are:

- No child shall be denied admission for want of documents
- There will be admitted throughout the year.
- No child shall be asked to take an admission test
- Children with disabilities will be educated in mainstream schools
- Private schools have to reserve 25% of their seats for students from weaker sections or disadvantaged groups
- Norms and Standards for education are laid down e.g., pupil-teacher ratios (PTR), buildings and infrastructure, school working days, and teacher working hours.

Odisha has become a role model for other states by imparting early childhood care and education in 10 tribal languages," said K Krishnan, southern region convener of the National Advocacy Council for Development of tribal People (NACDIP)."Non-formal preschool education is one of the core services under the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS). (ToI, 2013)

Analysis

The study findings revealed that the major causes of low educational status of the tribal could be broadly classified under three categories: socio-economic, psychological, Ignorance and educational.

1. Lack of adequate educational facilities

Despite the government's efforts, the tribal people are yet to have adequate educational facilities needed for their children's education. Tribal mostly live in hilly tracts, scattered places, inaccessible areas and isolated habitation. Making education available to them easily at their doorsteps is yet to be fully possible. A conducive environment for pursuing education properly by all tribal children is not yet created in certain places. Statistical data indicate that provision of school is not available for many tribal children living in inaccessible areas and for nomadic tribes due to their non-availability of permanent establishment.(Maharana & Nayak, 2017).

2. Distinction point of view and occupation

If an analysis is made of the total tribal population, one can distinctly visualize that condition, outlook, work culture, the standard of living and adherence to the modernization of tribal groups vary greatly. One group of tribes live in very inaccessible pockets who still have to feel the light of civilization and yet to reach society's mainstream, leaving their traditional ways of living and style. Another group of tribal live in habitations and villages willing to avail the opportunity of education but are not provided such facilities yet. A third group of tribals live with non-tribal in rural and semi-urban areas, try to accommodate themselves with others in the mainstream of society but are still backward due to poverty, lack of proper education, encouragement, etc. The fourth group of tribals who have come to the higher group of society due to social mobility leads a better and more privileged life, even higher than certain non-tribal. These four groups of people, although tribal, have a different outlook on life and education. A similar type of treatment for their elevation seems inappropriate since the last category of people do not need any special treatment as recommended and undertaken by the government. Besides, the government has not taken any means for developing the tribal communities.

3. Language Problem

Tribal students face language difficulties in teaching as they are not familiar with the state language Odia. Most tribes speak languages of their own in which there are no such written alphabet and the teacher appointed is not habituated. Even in one locality, district, state, and tribal speak various dialects. The regional language used in the State becomes difficult, like an alien language while studying in school. As a result, tribal children face a great deal of difficulties in school during their studies. Most children, due to language difficulty, remain backward and underachievers. Despite enormous efforts to evolve certain tribal languages, which would be convenient to many tribes, a lot of difficulties are encountered in evolving language in which scripts can be prepared and learning materials and instruction can be provided.(Mohanty, 2000)

4. Indifferent Attitude towards Change and Development

This is an age of explosion. Lots of changes are evinced every time and everywhere. Development has become a catchword in a welfare state, and emphasis is being laid on providing equality of opportunity and equity to the tribals. However, all efforts of the government to alleviate the condition of tribals are viewed indifferently. Some do not want to do away with their traditions and customs. For this, the results of many programs targeted to uplift and upheaval the tribals are not properly recognized and accepted. This type of attitude remains a stumbling block in the development of tribal education.

6. Mass poverty

A very big issue of tribal populations is below the poverty line. Research studies have proved that their utter poverty is due to their illiteracy and Ignorance, although they are not idle and not indifferent to

physical work. Most tribes do adhere to their old traditional ways of living, doing and systems, which have become outdated in the modern world of advanced science and technology. Though there is enough scope for free education sponsored by the State Government, parents do not avail the benefit due to poor awareness and sensitization. Poverty cannot stand loggerhead in education.

7. Poor and Irregular Attendance in School

Enrolment, retention and achievement of tribal children are quite below the percentage of other social group students, wastage and stagnation are there. Due to poverty, parents cannot send their children to school; rather, they prefer to engage them in earning activities, collecting fuel, fodder and taking care of siblings. Even those who go to school often discontinue in the middle without completing a certain level of education. Due to irregular attendance, tribal children remain backward and underachievers and gradually disappear from the educational scenario.

8. Unpleasant and boring Curriculum

Tribal has a specific culture, tradition, beliefs, way of living and doing things. The curriculum prescribed by the School Board to be taught in the schools seems to them quite unattractive and uninteresting because they feel their environment, beliefs, way of living, and feelings are not reflected in the curriculum and in no way very much useful for them in earning and living. The current curriculum is overloaded with too many subjects that are not fully necessary and useful. As a result, these children do not show keen interest and love for studying the subjects. (Tribal Education in India, 1985)

9. Insufficient Teaching Materials

Operation Backboard Scheme enunciated by NPE and POA 1986 and 1992 operates in primary and upper primary schools and in most tribal schools. Still then, some schools located in tribal pockets do not have the necessary teaching materials and other accessories to attract the tribal children to school for study. Even if all materials are supplied, they are not effectively utilized by the teachers due to the non-availability of electricity in school and other facilities. Since the curriculum is fast-changing, teaching materials are not supplied accordingly to the schools.

10: Non-availability and Un trident Teachers

Primary schools inhabited in tribal areas need teachers to speak the local dialect and have an interest in and aptitude for teaching the children in the tribal areas. However, there is quite a dearth of such teachers, which is a stumbling block to the proper education of tribal children. Many teachers are posted to tribal schools who do not have any interest in solving their problems and often remain absent and indifferent towards educating the tribal children. Teachers with an interest in and aptitude for teaching tribal children in interior hilly and inaccessible areas are not sufficiently available which stand in educating tribal children.

11. There are some administrative and bureaucratic problems in devising a Strategies for Promoting Education of Tribal

Despite governments' efforts in providing education to scheduled caste and scheduled tribe children after independence on a mass scale, we are still far from attaining the MDG I. Let us discuss certain important educational strategies by which the impediments that stand in the way of education of SCs and STs can be surmountable.

● **Reservations** of seats for ST students are there in government schools. However, if it is extended to **non-governmental schools**, they will benefit from obtaining training, apprenticeship and appointment.

● To provide necessary inputs to ST students preparing for different entrance examinations and jobs, **coaching, training, and compensatory education** should be made available for ST students free of cost so that they would be able to compete with others by acquiring necessary knowledge and competence.

● Besides education at the school level, **Indira Gandhi National Open University Centres should be opened** in tribal populated areas to make higher education universal so that the ST population can pursue higher study at their own pace in the vicinity with minimum expenditure.

● **Guidance and counseling centers** should provide ST students with the different opportunities available for them at different places according to their abilities and needs.

● **Monitoring of the program** should be done at the grass-root level through the village education committee (VLC) with adequate representation of local scheduled tribe people.

● The government needs to develop the curricula and devise institutional materials in tribal languages at the initial stages, with arrangements for switching to **regional languages**.

● The **curriculum** at all stages of education will be designed to create an awareness of the rich cultural identity of the tribal people as also as their enormous creative talent. To make education, a good resource for the tribal, its curriculum needs to be changed according to local needs and requirements. Education can be made productive if it furthers the local (traditional) specialization

● Vocational education should provide during secondary school, which special related to their culture and economic life. Especial training should provide for developing vocational education in their native place.

● **Anganwadis, Non-formal and Adult education centres** will be opened on a priority basis in areas predominantly inhabited by the Scheduled Tribes.

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