



A Study Of Socio-Economic Status And Academic Achievement Of Tribal Students In Visakhapatnam District

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ABSTRACT

Education is a multifaceted process of acquiring knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that contribute for the holistic development of individuals. Its purpose lies not only in the transmission of information; but also in fostering critical thinking, creative thinking, logical thinking and reasoning among the students. It is one of the most powerful instruments of social, economic and cultural transformation necessary for the realization of national goals. It has relevance to the needs and aspirations of the people living in a fast changing society. Education of tribal students is an important task before the Government of India. The Article 46 of the Indian Constitution talks about promotion of educational and economic interests of people belonging to Schedule Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and other weaker sections. Many more other constitutional rights are available for tribal people but they fail to utilize these benefits because of their educational backwardness. The education of tribal children can significantly be influenced by different socio-economic factors. There is a gap between school culture and family culture of children, creating a situation of cultural mismatch, resulting into several problems that obstruct education of tribal children. The socio-economic status of tribal students has a direct bearing on their education at secondary level. The present study is an attempt to explore the socio-economic status of tribal students and its impact on their academic achievement. The study was conducted using survey method. The sample of the study consists of 450 students (250 boys and 200 girls) selected randomly from 15 Ashram schools in Visakhapatnam District. The data were collected from the students using a questionnaire. The variables considered for the study include gender, class/grade, father's occupation and parental income of tribal students studying in Ashram schools. The data were analyzed using Arithmetic Means, Standard Deviations and Critical Ratios. The findings of the study revealed that the gender and class of students have no influence on their socio-economic status. However, the occupation of parents and family income has a significant positive influence on their perceptions towards socio-economic status. The study revealed that there is positive relationship

between the socio-economic status and Academic Achievement of tribal students studying in Ashram schools.

Key Words: Tribal students, Socio-economic, Academic achievement, Ashram Schools

INTRODUCTION

Education is an effective means of social reconstruction. It has relevance to the needs and aspirations of the people living in a fast changing society. Education of tribal children is an important task before the Government of India. The Article 46 of the Indian Constitution talks about promotion of educational and economic interests of people belonging to Schedule Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and other weaker sections. The article says: "The State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of weaker sections of the people and in particular of SCs and STs and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitations". For several historical, economic and social reasons the scheduled groups have remained economically backward and socially retarded even to this day. This is true with respect to their educational levels also. The biggest issue with teaching tribal children is the lack of adaptability of tribal children to non-tribal conditions. There is a gap between school culture and family culture of children, creating a situation of cultural mismatch, resulting into several problems that impede quality improvement in tribal education. To bridge the gap, it is suggested that the school managements and the administration should evolve curriculum which is relevant, decentralized and flexible; and to adopt appropriate pedagogy in teaching tribal children. The life-experiences of the tribal children should be related to the class room teaching; and accordingly the academic activities are to be planned at institutional level.

THE MEANING AND NATURE OF A 'TRIBE'

The term "tribe" originated around the time of the Greek city-states and the early formation of the Roman Empire. The word 'tribe' was derived from the Latin term, "tribus", which means "one third". The word originally referred to one of the three territorial groups which united to make Rome. It has since been transformed to mean "a group of persons forming a community and claiming descent from a common ancestor" (Oxford English Dictionary). Common ancestors, descent and common dialect are some of the important attributes to understand the group/community as a 'tribe'. The word "tribe" is generally used for a "socially cohesive unit, associated with a territory, the members of which regard themselves as politically autonomous" (Mitchell, 1972). With the upsurge of nationalism in Europe, the term 'tribe' was used to denote a particular stage in the socio-political growth of a community of people speaking a certain language within a specified territory. Clan, tribe and nation came to denote in European phraseology successive stages in the liberal march towards nationhood (Ray, Nihar Ranjan, 1972).

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” (**Purshottam and Vanita Dhingra, 2017**). For Romans, the tribe was a political division. The Dictionary of Anthropology mentions ‘tribe’ as a social group, usually with a definite area, dialect, cultural homogeneity and unifying social organization. The tribes in India differ from one another depending upon the region, language, customs, culture, religion, racial traits and so on. Often a tribe possesses a distinct dialect and distinct cultural traits. In the West, as also in India, the word, ‘tribe’ initially had a totally different connotation than what is prevalent now (**Verma, R.C., 1990**).

Lewis H. Morgan (1877), in his book “Ancient Society”, defines tribe as a completely organized society where all forms of social relation are dominated by kinship. For Morgan, tribal society is organized in such a way that their form of social organization is capable of reproducing itself. A tribe, according to him, is a collection of a number of clans who have distinct nomenclature, separate language, distinct political organization and a territory under their own possession.

According to **Majumdar, D.N. (1937)**, “a tribe is a collection of families or group families bearing a common name, members of which occupy the same territory, speaking the same language and observe certain taboos regarding marriage, profession or occupation and have developed a well-assessed system of reciprocity and mutuality of obligations”.

In the words of R.N. Mukherjee, ‘A tribe is that human group, whose members have common interest, territory, language, social law and economic occupation’ (**Prasad Reddy, B.R., 2021**). From the study of the anthropological literature, it appears that the term, ‘tribe’ has been used for those groups of human beings, whose place of residence is situated in remote areas like hills, forest, sea coasts and islands; and whose style of life is quite different from the present day civilized men.

EDUCATION OF TRIBAL COMMUNITIES IN INDIA

The concentration of tribal population is high in states like Andhra Pradesh (now divided into Andhra Pradesh and Telangana), Chattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Uttarakhand and the Northeastern states of India. Children constitute a larger proportion of the tribal population when compared to non-tribal population (**Rustogi et al., 2012**). However, ST children are found to lag further behind in education when compared with other deprived groups such as the SCs, despite the number of special educational provisions and incentives designed for them (**Jha and Jhingran 2005; NCERT-2006b**). Even though in recent years there has been a large growth in enrolment of tribal children, their enrolment ratios continue to be below the national averages (**NCERT-2006b**). Access and enrolment of tribal students also vary both geographically as well as in terms of gender, with girls in particular seriously lagging behind boys (**Nanjunda, 2000; Sujatha, 2004**). Studies have shown that deprivations

faced by tribal children consist of a larger set than what is accounted by conventional measures of poverty (**Rustogi et al., 2012**). Several studies revealed that the Socio-economic status of tribal students influences their academic achievement in schools.

The educational outcomes of tribal children are affected by socio-cultural factors, in addition to school-related variables (**Sujatha, 2004**). Access to basic education still remains a challenge for a large segment of tribal population across the country, especially in economically or/and educationally backward areas (**NCERT, 2006b**). The dropout rates for tribal children between classes I-V have been particularly high in India (65 per cent, with the dropout rate for tribal girls being as high as 82 per cent). Further, a number of studies have shown that tribal children have lower achievement levels as compared to non-tribal children (**Sujatha, 2004**).

The constitutional machinery had designed various programs and policies that aim at the welfare and social security of these indigenous tribal people in the country. Yet the process of total empowerment of tribal people did not reach the zenith and there have been mixed experiences of effectiveness in the form of quality and standard of these tribal people. Since India's Independence, the Central and the State governments have been launching several schemes and programmes to educate the country's tribal population. These include the establishment of Ashram Schools, Ekalavya Model Residential Schools, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas and vocational training centers.

QUALITY EDUCATION FOR TRIBAL CHILDREN

Spread of quality education among marginalized sections like tribes of the society has become a formidable task in India today. Quality education for tribal children needs to be considered on priority basis not only because of the constitutional obligation, but also for the comprehensive development of the tribal communities in the country. However, under the influence of globalization, tribal education and culture have been tremendously influenced. The uniqueness of the tribal culture, which enriches the country's culture, is fast disappearing and even getting indistinct under very powerful influences of the dominant urban culture. According to **Rita Rani Talukdar (2013)**, "Different types of programmes like compensatory, remedial, enrichment, guidance, teacher-orientation, parental education, curriculum renewal etc., are to be conducted regularly in the schools in tribal areas with a view to provide quality education for tribal children. These programmes will help in increasing the educational attainment and personality development of the tribal students".

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF TRIBAL STUDENTS

The Socio-economic Status of a community encompasses not only the income status of people but also their beliefs, customs and traditions which they inherit from their ancestors. Socio-cultural and Economic status can encompass attributes of quality of life as well as the opportunities and privileges afforded to people within that society. Further, the socio-cultural and economic status is consistent and reliable predictor of a vast array of outcomes across the life span, including physical and psychological health. Socio-

cultural and economic conditions occupy a prime place in the life of every individual. If we look into the socio-cultural and economic conditions of tribes, they are far below the status of other communities living in the main-stream of the society. Therefore, it is the need of the hour to improve their socio-cultural and economic status to facilitate their all round development.

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF TRIBAL STUDENTS

Academic Achievement is the educational attainment of an individual. It shows what an individual earns and achieves academically in education. Educational or academic achievement is given a lot of importance in the context of Indian Education which evaluates the individual's progress and development. The academic achievement decides the future of an individual in terms of his career growth, opportunities and settlement in life.

The academic achievement of students differs from one individual to the other. Similarly, the academic achievement of tribal students also differs from that of the students belonging to other communities. Several research studies reveal that the tribal students perform low in their academic achievement as compared to those belonging to other communities. The scope of educational opportunities for tribal students is very much limited. Further, the tribal students come across several problems in pursuing their education in tribal areas.

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE EDUCATION OF TRIBAL STUDENTS

The education of tribal children can significantly be influenced by different socio-cultural and economic factors. The following are some of the Socio-cultural and economic factors that influence the education of tribal students:

- (i) **Language and Cultural Barriers:** If the curriculum is not in the native language of the students or does not reflect their cultural practices, it can create barriers to learning.
- (ii) **Access to Education:** Geographical isolation and lack of infrastructure can limit access to schools for tribal children.
- (iii) **Socio-economic status:** Economic disparities can affect access to resources such as text books, uniforms, and transportation needed by the tribal children.
- (iv) **Traditional Beliefs and Practices:** Cultural beliefs about the role of education, gender roles and traditional livelihoods can impact enrolment and retention of tribal students in schools.
- (v) **Marginalization and Discrimination:** Discrimination and marginalization within the education system can lead to lower participation and achievement levels among tribal children.
- (vi) **Quality of Education:** Quality of teaching, curriculum relevance and availability of trained teachers can affect the learning of tribal children.

(vii) **Government Policies and Programmes:** Policies related to tribal education such as reservation quotas and scholarships can also influence access to education in respect of tribal children.

NEED FOR THE PRESENT INVESTIGATION

Tribes are regarded as the most backward community of the country. So, a separate schedule is prepared for them in order to provide special privileges. Different constitutional provisions and safeguards are provided for their betterment and integration with the larger society. Yet, the situation of this segment of the population is really disappointing as they are still lagging behind. They are too poor to manage sufficient food and shelter for them. Most of the tribal people live in thatched houses which do not provide them proper protection from bitter cold in winter. They suffer from anemia, malnutrition and many other diseases; and are not able to obtain proper care and treatment owing to their poor financial condition as well as the lack of proper health care delivery system in the tribal areas. Education may play the most crucial role to change this situation but their poor educational achievements slow down the rate of progress of these people. However, the Government of India has undertaken different welfare measures during the successive planning periods and allotted funds for those developmental schemes. Though the result is not very encouraging, rather it emphasizes the need for taking this issue more sincerely and find out the right way to bring an effective change in the tribal situation. Previously, several studies have been conducted on this problem but most of them are at macro level. But, the problems and priorities of tribal people vary from one area to another depending on the situation of local needs. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct the micro level studies widely to identify and quantify the socio-cultural and economic factors which are responsible for the backwardness in the education of tribal people belonging to a particular area. Hence, the investigator thought it necessary to conduct a micro level study on the socio-cultural and economic status of tribal students in relation to their academic achievement at secondary school level.

This study is a sincere attempt to have an idea of the present socio-economic status of the tribal people and its impact on the education of their children in schools. For this, the investigator selected the students studying in the Ashram schools in Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh. The researcher intends to explore the socio-economic status of the tribal students of this area and its impact on their academic achievement. The present study is an attempt in this direction.

The present investigation is an attempt to study the perceptions of tribal students studying in the Ashram Schools towards their socio-economic status in Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh. Further, the study also takes into its purview the influence of certain demographic variables, viz., gender, class/grade, father's education and parental income on the perceptions of tribal students studying in Ashram Schools towards the influence of socio-economic status on their education.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the present investigation is to explore the perceptions of students studying in Ashram schools towards the influence of socio-economic status on their education. The present study also aims at studying the influence of gender, class/grade, father's occupation and parental income on the perceptions of students in Ashram Schools towards the influence of socio-economic status on their education.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

The following hypotheses have been formulated for the present investigation:

- (i) There is no significant difference in the perceptions of tribal boys and girls towards the influence of socio-economic status on education.
- (ii) There is no significant difference in the perceptions of 8th and 9th class tribal students towards the influence of socio-economic status on education.
- (iii) There is no significant difference in the perceptions of tribal students with their parents working as employees and farmers towards the influence of socio-economic status on education.
- (iv) There is no significant difference in the perceptions of tribal students whose parental income is less than Rs.1 lakh and those with 1 lakh and above towards the influence of socio-economic status on education.
- (v) There is no relationship between the socio-economic status and academic achievement of tribal students.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study is limited to find out the perceptions of 450 tribal students (250 boys and 200 girls) selected randomly from 15 Ashram schools in Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh. The study is confined to know the influence of four demographic variables, viz., Gender, class/grade, father's occupation and parental income on the perceptions of tribal students towards their socio-economic status. Further, the study seeks to explore the relationship between socio-economic status and academic achievement of tribal students.

METHODOLOGY

(a) Sample: The sample of the study consists of 450 tribal students (250 boys and 200 girls) selected randomly from 15 Ashram schools located in Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh selected by using Random Sampling technique.

(b) Research Tool: The researchers used a well prepared questionnaire consisting of 35 items as the tool of research for the present investigation. After selecting the items for the tool, the researchers verified whether the tool prepared for the present investigation is in conformity with the conditions required by a standard measuring instrument. The tool was administered to 45 students (25 boys and 20 girls) working in Ashram schools under pilot study. On conducting item analysis, the discriminating power of 30 items has been found positive and that of 5 items is negative. The

negative items have been removed from the pool; and the final form of questionnaire consists of 30 items which are foolproof in all respects. The summative assessment marks of the students of their previous class have been taken from the school records for purpose of estimating their academic achievement.

(c) Administration of the Tool

The final form of the standardized questionnaire consisting of 30 items on various factors relating to the socio-economic status of tribal students influencing their education has been administered to 450 students (250 boys and 200 girls) studying in 15 Ashram schools in Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh. These students include boys and girls studying in classes 8th and 9th in Ashram schools.

STATISTICAL INTERPRETATION OF DATA

The data collected has been analyzed using different statistical techniques such as Mean score values, Standard Deviations and t-ratios; and is presented in the following table:

Table showing t-values of different variables relating to the perceptions of tribal students towards the influence of Socio-economic status on education

S. No.	Variable		N	Mean	S.D.	t-ratio	Result
1	Gender	Boys	250	103.00	26.90	1.72*	*Not Significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels
		Girls	200	95.21	26.79		
2	Class/grade	8 th class	240	99.23	28.70	0.29*	*Not Significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels
		9 th class	210	102.50	24.41		
3	Father's occupation	Employee			27.45	2.94*	*Significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels
		Farmer	160	101.52	27.96		
	Parental income	Less than Rs.1 lakh	270	94.25	27.26	3.16*	*Significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels
4		Rs.1 lakh & above	180	103.62	26.64		

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

On the basis of the analysis and interpretation of data, the researchers have arrived at the following findings and drawn the conclusions.

1. There is no significant difference in the perceptions of tribal boys and girls towards the influence of socio-economic status on education.
2. There is no significant difference in the perceptions of 8th and 9th class tribal students towards the influence of socio-economic status on education.
3. There is significant difference in the perceptions of tribal students with their parents working as employees and farmers towards the influence of socio-economic status on education.

It is concluded that the tribal students whose parents are employees perceived higher towards the influence of socio-economic status on education as compared to their counterparts whose parents are farmers.

4. There is significant difference in the perceptions of tribal students with their parental income less than Rs. 1 lakh and those with Rs.1 lakh and above towards the influence of socio-economic status on education.

It is concluded that the tribal students whose parental income is Rs.1 lakh and above per annum perceived higher towards the influence of socio-economic status on education as compared to their counterparts whose parental income is less than Rs.1 lakh per annum.

CONCLUSIONS

From the summative assessment marks obtained by the students in their previous classes, it is concluded that the socio-economic status of tribal students has a positive influence on their academic achievement.

The students with a better socio-economic status exhibited better performance in their academic achievement. On the other hand, students, whose socio-economic status is low, exhibited low performance in their academic achievement.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The following are the educational implications of the present study.

- (i) The present study helps the students understand their socio-economic status. The study helps them realize that their socio-economic status has a positive influence on their academic performance.
- (ii) The study is an eye-opener to the policy makers to evolve policies with a view to improve the socio-economic status of tribal communities.
- (iii) The study helps to improve the working conditions in Ashram schools in order to provide quality education to tribal children.
- (iv) The study helps the parents to realize the need for education of their children to improve their socio-economic status.

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