



TRIBAL INDIA

Issues and Challenges

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Tribal India: Issues and Challenges

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10. Constitutional Rights to Tribal Development in India	95
<i>Divine Tomar & Anand Prakash Dube</i>	
11. Tribal Education in India: Problems and Prospects	102
<i>Dr. Savita Mishra</i>	
12. Tribal Development Issues and Challenge	117
<i>Manoj Das</i>	
13. Tribal Education in India: Challenges and Schemes	130
<i>Mrs. C. Sofia Selvarani & Dr. M. Maria Saroja</i>	
14. Socio-Economic, Health and Education Status of Tribal Women in India	139
<i>Dr. Mukta Goyal</i>	
15. Impact of Social Media on Tribal Culture in India	146
<i>Prasanta Adhikary</i>	
16. Tribal Education in India	154
<i>Muskan Gupta & Abhishek Srivastava</i>	
17. Constitutional Provisions for Indian Tribes: A Theoretical Aspects	163
<i>Pradip Karmakar</i>	
18. Socio-economic Issue and Challenge of Indian Tribes	172
<i>Sabina Khatun</i>	
19. Empowerment of Tribal Women: A Study on West Bengal	181
<i>Rakhi Mandal</i>	
20. Tribal Movement in India	187
<i>Rakesh Kumar Roy</i>	
21. Several Issues, Challenges and Impact of Vocational and Value Education on Mundari Tribal Groups of the District North 24 Parganas in West Bengal	195
<i>Bipul Chakraborty</i>	
Index	210

Tribal Education in India: Challenges and Schemes

Mrs. C. Sofia Selvarani & Dr. M. Maria Saroja

1. Introduction

India has a rich glorious heritage, but a sizeable part of Indian population is yet to get benefits out of it. They are still tribal communities which are primitive and live in secluded areas (Verma 1996). The tribes in India usually reside in hill areas, forests, near the seas and in islands. Their lifestyle is quite different from non-tribals (Preet 1994). Since they are materially and economically backward, attempts have been made by the government to develop them. Today, the governments in all countries are paying special attention to development of the tribes (Nithya 2014). Though our national leaders and constitutional makers are committed to uplift the tribal people, a desired level of development has not been achieved yet (Chandra Guru et. Al: 2015). In the light of above observations, the paper discusses the status, challenges in tribal education and schemes developed by the government for the tribal education in India.

2. Review of Literature

There is considerable literature on tribal development and growth of education among the tribals. According to Virginus Xaxa (2015), the colonial state did almost nothing to improve the socio-economic conditions of the tribals other than providing them protective measures. He says that the post-Independent India also continued the same policy with the little modification such as providing certain percentage of seats in state sponsored educational institutions and government services. Though reservation provides employment

opportunities, the lack of educational qualifications and necessary skills denied them of the jobs, and the reserved seats remain vacant in many cases.

Gaurang Rami's (2012) paper discuss the status of primary education in tribal district of Dang in Gujrat. In the district, there are about 412 primary schools; out of which 378 primary schools are run by the district Panchayat. The conclusion is that most of the schools have buildings, but fail to attract the girl students owing to lack of other essential amenities like drinking water as well as separate toilets for boys and girls. Hence, the drop out ratio goes higher among the tribal girls. Another problem that makes tribal students leave schools is the medium of instruction which is quite different from their own vernacular dialect.

Pradhan and Sanjay Kumar (2011) describe that despite special initiatives like Ashram schools, introducing vernacular at primary level, and teaching in local dialects, the tribals are still lagging behind the non-tribals. Under such circumstances the government and policy makers should put best efforts to improve their educational status.

Arun Kumar Ghosh's paper (2007) provides in-depth literature on tribal education in Jharkand and West Bengal. He says that few tribals badly in need of special attention for literary and basic education. He observes the female enrolment ratio of the tribals is much lower among these tribals than that of their males. A further sharp decline of enrolment was observed immediately after the primary education, and this trend continued among males and females.

Vinoba Gautam's paper (2003) on Janasala experience, a collaborative programme between the government of India and United Nations agencies to achieve universal elementary education, especially for girls and children from the deprived communities, working children, and children with specific needs says that it tries to cover nearly three million children; out of it 33% would be tribal children. Finally, the paper concludes that non-tribal education has very limited value in tribal cultural milieu because it does not match with the lifestyle of individuals and the needs of the tribal community. There is a need to linking school education with life and the needs of the tribal communities.

Kumar Rana et. Al (2003), while reviewing the situation the situation of primary education in West Bengal, point out multiple problems that the primary education across India has been facing,

such as infrastructure, shortage of schools, shortage of teachers and financial handicap of the parents. He also added that just identifying the problems of infrastructure would not provide quality or spread primary education.

3. Educational Status of Tribals in India

India advocates inclusive growth, but owing to lack of education and skill development, the marginalized sections are not becoming part of the inclusive growth. To ensure inclusive growth, the constitution has empowered the backward classes with reservations in education and jobs. For this purpose, the Constitution of India has earmarked certain provisions to enable the SCs and STs to access education (T. Brahmanandam & T. Bosu babu 2016). Framers of the Indian Constitution have paid attention to the marginalized section in India and listed the following constitutional provision for Scheduled Caste.

Article 46 of the Indian Constitution lays down that, the state shall promote, with special care, the educational and economic interests of weaker sections of the people, and particular, of the scheduled caste and scheduled tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.

Article 154(4) empowers the state to make any special provision for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizen or for SCs or STs

Article 29(1) provides distinct languages script or culture. This article has special significance for scheduled tribes

Untouchability is abolished under Article 17, and its practice in any form a punishable offence

Article 275 (1) provides Grants in-Aids to states (having scheduled tribes) covered under fifth and six schedules of the constitution.

Article 350A states that 'It shall be the endeavor of every state and every local authority within the state to provide adequate facilities for instruction in mother-tongue at the primary stage of education to the children belonging to minority group....."

Article 243D, 330 and article 332 provides reservation of seats for STs in gram Panchayat, house of people and state legislative assembly.

Many other provisions are laid down in articles 15,16,335,338A,342 etc.

4. Challenges in Tribal Education

Despite constitutional provisions educating tribal children is still a major concern for the government. There are so many socio-cultural, economical, geographical and administrative obstacles (report Ministry of Tribal Affairs, GOI, 2013) for which literacy rate of tribal people has never been at par with entire population, and gap between them is always high. The challenges faced by the tribal people in order to acquire education are as follows.

4.1. Language of Instruction

Language has been the important constraints in tribal education. Government schools use the state language for teaching, which is most often not familiar to tribal child at the pre-primary and primary levels. Tribal children have limited contact with the state language, and tend to speak in their home language. They are, thus, unable to fully comprehend classroom teaching and activities, read in the state language or understand the texts properly. But the study conducted by Pradhan and Pattanaik (2011) revealed that tribal students did not show interest to pursue formal education in their home language (s). They opined that education in the medium of their home languages (tribal languages) would not help them to expand the horizon of their knowledge.

4.2. Curriculum Content - Local Adaption of Methods and Materials

Research in child development and pedagogy has indicated that a young child learns concepts better if these are embedded in contexts that are meaningful, i.e. contexts that are local and familiar. The words, terminologies, messages, topics reflected in the syllabus and textbooks are most often alien to tribals (M.C.Upmanu 2016). The new National Curriculum Framework, however, recommends a plurality of textbooks meant to create a theoretical space for local specificity.

4.3. Teacher Training and Pedagogy

Teachers for educating children, in tribal/scheduled areas, may or may not be from the tribal community. The presence of tribal teachers, especially from the same community, has shown and improved school participation of tribal children, as these teachers understand and respect the culture with greater sensitivity. Training and capacity building has to be undertaken on a sustained basis to ensure continued motivation on the part of teachers. Studies suggest

that teacher motivation contributes more to the teaching-learning process than teacher competence. The following are the key elements of teacher training and pedagogy:

- Training on Material Use
- Changes in perception of Teachers about Tribal Children
- Participatory Method of Teaching

In the absence of appropriate training in the use of materials, development of appropriate curriculum is a futile exercise. Research has shown that it is important to train the teachers in the use of dictionaries, flash cards and innovative teaching learning materials.

4.4. Community Participation and Ownership

For the community to be involved in the education process, youth tribal educators and tribal teachers from the community can act as agents of change. They can serve as role models and work together inside and outside the classroom. The following are key elements for effective community participation:

- ❖ **Obtain Buy-in from Local Stakeholders:** Gain trust of locals, learn from, and educate them, and build capacity of local tribal youths and community leaders.
- ❖ **Assure Community Participation:** Local community can participate and/or can be involved in different activities like construction of school building, documentation of local history, interaction between and amongst the participants through motivation.
- ❖ **Instill Sense of Accountability and Ownership among and Parents:** Local community should contribute in terms of cash, kind and labour, for the promotion of education of their children; and own the entire responsibilities of their school, including repair of school building, management of mid-day meal programme, preparation of TLMs, promotion of enrolment, school supervision and monitoring.
- ❖ **Empowering Communities:** Communities should be empowered to demand appropriate and quality education services from the government through a multi-pronged strategy. (Source: "The Tribal Education in India, Status, Challenges and Issues" by M.C.Upmanyu)

5. Schemes for Tribal Development

5.1. Tribal Panchsheel:

Pandit Jawarhalal Nehru, the first prime minister of free India laid down five principles of tribal development which is called Tribal Panchsheel. It was ratified by Dhebar commission and enshrined in "A Philosophy for North Eastern Frontier Area" written by Verrier Elwin. These five principles are :

1. People should develop along lines of their own genius and we should avoid imposing anything on them. We should try to encourage in every way their own traditional arts and culture.
2. Tribal rights on land and forests should be respected.
3. We should try to train and build up a team of their own people to do work of administration and development. Some technical personnel from outside will, no doubt be needed, especially in the beginning. But we should avoid introducing too many outsider into tribal territory.
4. We should not over-administer these areas or over-whelm them with multiplicity of schemes. We should rather work through, and not in rivalry to, their own social and cultural institutions.
5. We should judge results, not by statistics or the amount of money spent, but by the quality of human character that is evolved. (Source : "A philosophy for NEFA" by Verrier Elwin)

5.2. 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. 10800 per year, are entitled for this scheme. This scheme is in operation since 1944-1942, and implemented by state government and UTs administration with 100% central assistance.

5.3. 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.

5.4. 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.

5.5. 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.

5.6. 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.

5.7. 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.

5.8. 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.

5.9. Tribal Research Institute:

Fourteen Tribal Institutes (TRIs) have been set in Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Manipur and Tripura.

5.10. Book Bank & Coaching for ST:

In order to reduce dropout rate among ST students from professional institutes/ universities, funds are allotted for purchase of books under this scheme. Also 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. (Source: "Tribal Education in India: Government Initiative and Challenges" by Shyamal Kumar Daripa)

6. Conclusion

Education is an important avenue for the upgradation of economic and social status of marginalized communities in the society. Since the attainment of independence, government of India has planned several schemes to spread education among the tribals. In spite of these schemes the education imparted to tribal communities does not meet its expected level. It is now significant that the time has come to consider the holistic tribal education and their inclusive growth. The government and policy makers need to concentrate more on a long-term strategy to enhance the educational status of tribal children. "Tribal communities will have to be elevated economically and educationally for promotion of a socio-economically integrated healthy society in the remote pockets," said Daniel Pradhan, development practitioner who works with the Union Ministry of Minority Affairs. If drastic decisions are taken and effective plans are devised, the obstacles in pursuance of education by tribal children can be removed. Apart from government schemes, if various NGO's play a remarkable role in creating awareness among the tribals, the economic development of the nation can reach the desired height.

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ABOUT THE BOOK

India accepts tribal groups are as like as the indigenous people (adivasis) by various Government reports and publications. Indian tribal groups are covered under the definition of indigenous people. The book **"Tribal India: Issues and Challenges"** is a critical review to identify issues and challenges in the socio-economic and cultural sectors of various tribal groups in India. This volume is emphasizing on tribal history, Socio-economic development of tribal groups, tribal education, empowerment of tribal women, ethnic identity of tribal groups, tribal culture etc. The edited volume has 21 chapters written by reputed scholars across the country. The policy makers, thinkers, development personal, researchers and upcoming generation will get new path of knowledge on tribal development.

ABOUT THE EDITORS



Krittibas Datta is currently working as a State Aided College Teacher, Department of Political Science, Jalangi Mahavidyalaya (Affiliated to University of Kalyani), Jalangi, Murshidabad, West Bengal. He has obtained his master degree from University of Kalyani, Kalyani, West Bengal. He completed his M.Phil from the Department of Political Science, University of Gour Banga, Malda, West Bengal and is currently working on his Ph.D. research in the same institute. He has participated and presented papers in various national and international conference, seminar, workshop, webinar and published a number of articles in national & international journals also chapters in edited book. He has edited two reputed book and Co-edited ten books. He is a life member of Indian Political Science Association (IPSA). He is interested to research on Indian Politics and Administration, Identity Politics, Tribal and Dalit Studies, Local Self Government, etc.



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