

Tribal education and quality of life: issues & challenges

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ABSTRACT

Tribes have a different way of living with a distinct cultural pattern. Some states have maximum number of tribal communities like Biagha, Bhil and Kol in Madhya Pradesh and Mundas in Bihar, Orissa and West Bengal. They live a miserable life without enough resources and have a lot of issues and problem such as economic problem, illiteracy, unemployment, housing and nutrition problem. A lot of educational problems are faced by tribal communities; hence government is trying his best to resolve all these problems by implementing specific laws. The objective of this paper is to discuss major issues and problems faced by tribal communities in India with special reference to their educational problem. Further the researcher focuses on the laws made by the government for upliftment of the tribes and discusses the major challenges to solve the educational problem.

Keywords: Tribes, Education, Quality of life, Laws

India is the home to large number of indigenous group of people. Who is still untouchable by the lifestyle of the modern world? In general, the tribal are backward as compared to non-tribal people. Despite the tribal's proximity to caste groups tribes have their distinct identities.

According to census (2001) the scheduled tribes form 8.20% of the total population, where as they were 8.08% as per the 1991 census.

G.S Ghurye (1963) writes in his book about scheduled tribes: "the scheduled tribes are neither called the 'Aborigines' nor the 'Adivasi' nor are they treated together with the scheduled caste and further envisaged as one group of backward class.

In modern literature the scheduled tribes are sometimes referred to as untouchables. In Tamilnadu they are referred as Adi Dravida and in other state mostly referred as scheduled class.

According to 2011 census "scheduled tribes comprise about 16.6% and 8.6% respectively of India's population.

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According to oxford dictionary “A social division in a traditional society consisting of families or communities linked by social, economic, religious or blood ties with a common culture and dialect typically having a recognized leader.

Types of tribes

Lakshadweep, Mizoram, Nagaland, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar having maximum number of tribal communities. Punjab, Delhi, Chandigarh, Pondicherry, Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir are those states where there is no ST. some important tribal groups are:

- Abors found in Arunachal Pradesh
- Baiga & Bhil in Madhya Pradesh
- Bhil also found in Rajasthan, some in Gujarat and Maharashtra
- Bhot in Himanchal Pradesh
- Khasis in Assam and Meghalaya
- Kuki in Manipur
- Koal in Madhya Pradesh
- Mundas tribe is found in Bihar, orrisha, west Bengal.
- Santhal in Bengal, purnia (Bihar), Orissa
- Todas in nilgiri (tamilnadu)
- Warlis in Maharashtra

Life of tribes

The life of tribal communities is full of challenges. They face a lot of problems to survive. At some place the tribals have been made to serve as bounded labors. Even now a day's doms and colta's tribe communities serve the upper caste families in Uttar Pradesh. In Rajasthan the sagri system, in Andhra the vetti system, in Orissa the gothi system, in Karnataka the jetha system and in Chhattisgarh the naukrinaama system are the example of the boundedness. They have borrowed money from the money Landers, but have not been able to pay back so they bound to work till they bound to work till they return the loan.

The health condition of the tribes is also not good. Most of tribal people in India is illiterate. They believe in faith, cure, and age old methods and also depend on local herbal medicines Gare (1983) writes that the status of the tribal, or any other social group, can't be improved with illiteracy, ill health and poverty. The extremely low levels of literacy, education and health. Nutrition status of the tribal put a constraint on improving their economic status.

MAJOR ISSUE AND PROBLEMS

As tribes are deprived and oppressed communities in India. They live in isolation and backward therefore they have to face many problems and issue in their life.

Some problems discussed under the following heads:

Socio- Economic Problem

Generally, we can find the conditions of tribal communities in most of the countries including India are very distressful. People / population of schedule tribe don't have a proper source of income. They are unable to fulfill their basic needs like food, proper clothes and enough shelter. The condition of these tribes is poor so they can't afford a good school for their children and they complied to send them to work as child labour so they could earn some money for their livelihood. Vijay lakshmi 2003 identified the problems of tribal students. some factors like most of the tribal children were engaged in crucial family were like cattle gazing, labour on work sites, collecting firewood and other minor forest products,

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stone quarrying, mining and home-based work such as processing forest products: the level of utilization of technology in the tribal area has remained low.

Illiteracy

Illiteracy rate among tribal is very low while in 1961 it was 18.53%. In 1991 it increased to 29.60. If we compare it to general literacy rate (52.21%). It's very low. Mizoram is 82.71% in Nagaland, Sikkim and Kerala. It is between 57% and 61%. Lack of literacy among tribal people has been identified as a major development problem (puja mondal, 9 main problems.)

Indebtedness

Banking facilities are also not adequate in tribal areas so they have to depend on money lenders. They possess small and uneconomical land holding because of which their crop yield is less and hence they remain chronically indebted of these moneylenders.

Unemployment

The tribes are basically hill and forest dwellers. There are no industries and no opportunities of jobs so the tribes unemployed. They use secondary source of income such as husbandry, poultry, farming, handloom, weaving and the handicraft work for their livelihood.

Housing problem

House is the basic need for every human being which protects him from seasonal effect and other dangers. The tribes face a lot of problems related to their house such as they live in one room and two room huts, don't have houses made from bricks from leaf and roots and branches of trees, can't protect them from seasonal temperature and They live with their cattle/ farm animals so it's difficult to them to maintain cleanliness and healthy environment.

Drinking water problem

Scheduled tribes don't have the regular drinking water supply. They are inhibited of using the water which is collected in small ditches. this proves hazardous to their health.

Nutritional problem

This problem also faced by the tribal due to lack of balanced diet, tribal suffer from various vitamins deficiency disease for example night blindness.

Transport problem

The road facilities are inadequate and a large number of villages are still unconnected with the network of existing road system.

Exploitation

Non tribal merchants, big farmer and money lenders do exploit the tribal. Indebtedness is almost universal, recurring and almost inevitable. Exploitation of the debtors by the creditors, though arising in the context of economic transaction is nevertheless a typical example of a social problem. Indebtedness becomes permanent conditions for scheduled caste and scheduled tribes as in even passed on from father and son. The situation is due to economic factors and large-scale exploitation (government of India report, 1967, p.no. 75)

Educational Problems

Education plays an important role for all round development of a person. Economic development of a nation always depends on education. If people are illiterate the concerned authorities can't implement strict economic policies and programmes. The rate of literacy

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among the scheduled tribes has been very low. Acc to census 2001 it's found far below the overall literacy of the country. For a tribal family to send its grownup child to school is essentially a matter of economics "many parents can't just afford to send their children to school (elwin, 1963, 1984). Lack of education is a stumbling below to the tribals in attaining a higher standard of life.

The problems that's why the literacy rate and school enrolment of tribal child is below average.

Negative Parental Attitude

As the literacy rate of the tribe is below from the general population. Parents of tribal children not well educated and are educationally backward. In their community there is no encouragement to the pupil to pursue the study and they don't want to send their girl child in a coeducational institute Jayawal et. al. (2003) examined the role or parental support on academic achievement of tribal students and found that the parent of higher exerted significantly more support to their children. On the other hand, the parents of lower achiever were not strongly ambitious of children's upward mobility.

Basic Amenities in School

In tribal areas most of schools don't provide basic amenities such as toilets, drinking water, electricity and adequate classroom for proper teaching. Vijayalaxmi (2003) conducted the study on identifying the problem of tribal students in secondary school. The finding of the study reveals that the residential schools are very poor in infrastructural facilities, poor non meal programme.

Communication problem

The teacher in classroom communicates in official/ regional language which is not understood by the tribe's child. They only understand their mother tongue. They think that the teacher is speaking any foreign language. Gautham, V. 2003 focused his study on education of tribal children and revealed that in India the appointment of non-tribal teachers in tribal school. The teacher couldn't understand the language of the children and in reverse the students are also unable to get the teacher.

Lack of Trained Teachers

Due to shortage teachers, tribal schools are unable to attract students and create interest of tribal students in study. Without proper training, they will not get enough knowledge, which teaching method be opted to teach particular group of students. Acc to Desai & Patel (1981) in relation to effectiveness of various interventions for improving tribal education studied that only 18 out of 22 residential schools have 100% teacher's strengths. And in some cases, the educational qualification of the teacher was below 10th class, which also adversely affects the student's achievement.

Lack of Transport Facilities

Most of tribal areas are hilly. The road facilities are inadequate so the child faces transport problems to reach school. They have to walk a longer distance which creates irregularity in school.

Government Laws for Upliftment

Tribes are very backward in education and all fields. It's a special responsibility of the state and central government to promote scheduled tribes.

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In Indian constitution according to article 46” state shall promote the weaker section of the people particularly STs and SCs and shall protect them from social injustice and all other kind of exploitation.

Article 154(4) says the states will make any special provision for progress of any socially and educationally backward class of citizen like STs and SCs.

Article 29 (1) provides dissimilar language, script and culture. it has more importance for ST.

Under article 17 untouchability is totally abolished and it’s a punishable offence if anyone does it in any form.

Articles 350 (A) state that it shall be endeavour of every state and every local authority with in the state to provide adequate facilities for instruction in mother tongue at the primary stage of education to the children belong to the minority group.

In national policy of education, 1986, it has been recognized education as an area in which tribal are undoubtedly far behind the rest of the population.

For the spread of education following schemes are implemented in the tribal areas.

- To opening balwadis in zilla parishad primary school.
- Book bank in primary school
- Special facilities to the students 1st to 5th.
- Attendance allowance to girls.
- Opening and development of non-government secondary schools.
- Development of higher secondary education.
- Adult education programme.
- Quality improvement of English teaching on tribal areas.

The national education policy stresses the universalizing of education under the goal, “education for all”.

In recent decade a number of incentives are provided such as –

Sarva Siksha Abhiyaan

In 2003 providing elementary education to all children in the age group of 6-12 by the year 2010.

Mid-day meal scheme 2001: which gives a mid-day meal to school going children, that dramatically increase the enrollment rate.

In 9th plan special provision including pre and post metric scholarship and hostel facilities are initiated exclusively for tribal.

Free Uniforms

There is a scheme of providing two sets of free uniform to the children belonging to sc in elementary schools.

Stipends:

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The SC children are entitled to stipends at varying scales at different stage of education

MAJOR CHALLENGES TO SOLVE THE EDUCATIONAL PROBLEM:

Lack of interest in school: parents of tribes child is not enough educated. They don't know the value of education so they unable to create interest of their child toward education.

Economic burden and unemployment

In tribal areas source of income is farming, poultry, handloom and weaving so parents involve their children in their work to reduce economic burden and don't send them to school.

Punishment and harassment by the teacher

Often teacher scold, insult and physically punish poorly performing child, so the child leaves the school from fear of teachers. Parents dropped out their girl child from the fear of boys teasing.

Lack of Family Support

Sometime parents don't support their child to continue their education. Especially in case of girl child.

Child Marriage

Child marriage is a big problem. After marriage a girl have a responsibility of household work. There in laws don't allow her to continue her studies so the girls dropped out.

Fear of Expenditure

Parents often noted that the schemes given by government to promote education did not provide enough cover in real, hidden costs and extra money was needed to cover the excess.

Narrow Mentality

The parents of a girl child have an old mentality regarding education of a girl child. They think there is no need to educate a girl. She should do household work that's enough for her so the parents don't take initiative to send the girl child in school.

Corruption:

The government provides a number of schemes to SC, ST communities like scholarship, free uniform, free books, bags stationary, bicycles etc. but because of corruption these facilities not reached to the concerned tribal communities.

SUGGESTIONS

- Literacy campaign should be done in different tribal areas to promote education of tribes.
- Relevant study material in local language should be used to teach tribal students.
- In tribal areas schools should be appointed local area teacher and female teacher also in school.
- Various scholarship and stipends should be given to attract pupil toward school.
- In tribal area problem of transport prevail to overcome this there should be residential schools.
- Proper monitoring should be done that all the schemes for tribes implementing properly. is the teacher doing their jobs sincerely.

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- A high-level official should check the functioning of school frequently.

CONCLUSION

This study has found a wide range of issues and problems faced by the tribal in India. They live a challenging life and face problems related to their residence, economic, transport, less basic amenities, indebtedness, unemployment and educational problem. Education is basic root to overcome all these problems. But to achieve education they have to face a lot of problems like lack of money, because of which they can't enroll their children in school. In tribal area's school problem of communication and untrained teachers are big barriers in education of tribes. If students and teachers are unable to understand each other's language then teaching learning process stops tribe's lives in hilly areas or in forest there the face the problem related to transport to reach school. To overcome these educational problems and for upliftment of tribes government had made some schemes like book banks in primary schools, adult education programme, quality improvement of English teaching in tribal areas, scholarship, free uniforms, mid-day meal, Sarva Siksha Abhiyaan. Government made policies and made serious effort to promote education in tribal areas rather there are some major challenges prevailed to solve these educational problems.

Most of the time tribal parents and children don't show interest in school. If the teacher punish student they avoid to go to school. Especially in case of girl child parents don't support her to enroll and continue her studies. Parents have narrow mentality regarding education; they do early marriage according to their culture. Rather than the government introduce many schemes and incentives to attract students toward education but because of corruption these facilities are not being provided to these areas.

In this way we discussed the educational pattern in tribal communities; major issues and challenges faced by them. We can upgrade their quality of life by motivating them and providing incentives toward educational setup. Tribes are integral part of Indian population, who plays a significant role to enrich the Indian culture

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Conflict of Interest

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