

Scope of Education among Tribal Children in Telangana

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ABSTRACT

Tribes are the people with different way of living and community life. They are living in definite geographical area. They have their own culture, customs, religious belief etc which make them different from other tribal community. Scheduled Tribes in India are generally considered to be 'Adivasis,' meaning indigenous people or original inhabitants of the country. The tribes have been confined to low status and are often physically and socially isolated instead of being absorbed in the mainstream Hindu population. Psychologically, the Scheduled Tribes often experience passive indifference that may take the form of exclusion from educational opportunities, social participation, and access to their own land. They belong to different racial stocks and religious backgrounds and speak different dialects. Discrimination against women, occupational differentiation, and emphasis on status and hierarchical social ordering that characterize the predominant mainstream culture are generally absent among the tribal groups. Adivasis are not as a general rule regarded as unclean or polluted in the same way as the Scheduled Caste population is perceived by the mainstream culture. However, the mainstream Hindu population considers the general tribal population as primitive, technologically backward, and illiterate. The literacy scenario of the Scheduled tribes in general is below the literacy rate of the general population of the country. This paper focuses the education of tribal children and the hurdles they faces.

Keywords: Tribal, Education, Literacy, Adivasis , tribal culture.

India is homeland to a number of tribal communities with diverse eco-cultural, socio-economic and geographical backgrounds. They have their own local language. According to Dr.D.N.Mazdur, a tribe is a collection of families bearing a common name, member of the tribe which can occupy same territory, speak the same languages and have developed well assessed system of reciprocity and of obligation.

Tribal population of the Telangana State, according to 2011 Census, is 32.87 lakhs which constitutes 9.34% of the total population of the State. ST literacy rate is 49.51 as against State literacy rate of 66.46. There are 32 Tribal groups living in the State which include 4 PVTGs (Particularly vulnerable Tribal Groups – earlier known as Primitive Tribal Group) viz., Kondareddies, Chenchus, Kolams and Thoties living in Khammam, Mahabubnagar,

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Nalgonda, Ranga Reddy, Adilabad Districts. The dominant tribal groups in the State are Lambada with a population of 20,46,117, Koyas – 4,86,391, Gonds – 2,97,846, Yerukalas – 1,44,128. The Government have accorded high priority for accelerated development of Tribals by implementing socio-economic development schemes. The major focus is on Education, Economic support and land based schemes.

Realizing that Scheduled Tribes are one of the most deprived and marginalized groups with respect to education, a host of programmes and measures have been initiated ever since independence of the country. Education of ST children is important not just due to a Constitutional obligation to equality of its citizen or special entitlements to ST, but because it is a crucial input in the nation's strategy of total development of tribal communities. However, despite nation's efforts to ensure constitutional equality, dignity and development that they themselves wish for, the tribal people have lagged behind in education owing to external as well as internal constraints, socio-economic and cultural background of the tribal's and psychological problems of first generation learners etc.

Education is the most important instrument for human resource development and has a great significance. One cannot imagine education without schools as it plays a major role in moulding the basic ideas, habits and attitudes of the children, with a view to producing well balanced individuals. Schools provide not only education to the children but also keep them away from social evils. Education is the key that opens the door of life. Education is widely accepted as the essential tool for the attainment of the developmental goals and leads to political consciousness, awareness of rights and duties among the people of nation and it is the most instrument for human resource development and has a great significant in the context of developing countries.

The Indian Constitution identifies and provides special consideration for certain ethnic minority groups, Scheduled Tribes who have been historically out of the mainstream development initiatives partly due to the still continuing socio-economic barriers and partly due to the inadequacy of the Government programs in reaching these disadvantaged groups, still find themselves in difficult to compete with other sections of the society.

External constrains: The perspective adopted for educational development among tribal communities fails to adequately address the specific disadvantages characterizing tribal population .For instance, the population and distance norms formed by the government have not been beneficial to tribal locations because of their sparse population and sporadic residential patterns. Telangana performance compares well with those of other states. The disparities between the marginalized communities and other social groups in terms of quantitative and qualitative indicators. The disparities increase at higher and higher levels of education, particularly in technical and professional education which provide better access to more remunerative jobs. It theses disparities within the state that matter more in view of the high unemployment rate in the state and consequently the highly competitive nature of the labour market Further, in formulating policies and programmes for tribal education it is essential to understand the complex realities of tribal life and the expectation of tribals from the system, and this has never been done either by the tribal welfare department or by the education department. Consequently, no worthwhile policy for tribal education has been formed. Because the more pass percentage rate from the schools of STs can only produces more students for higher education. Besides most of the increase in employment in the country and the state is taking place in the private sector rather than in the public sector. In such a context job reservation for STs in the public sector become less relevant today in accessing jobs by them.

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Internal constraints: The internal problems of tribal education refer to the quality of school provision, suitable teachers, relevance of content and curriculum, medium of instruction, pedagogy, and special supervision. A majority of schools in tribal areas are without basic infrastructure facilities. Normally, school buildings in tribal areas have thatched roofs, dilapidated walls, and non-plastered floors. Research evidence shows that a large number of tribal schools do not have teaching-learning materials, or even blackboards. In tribal areas the opening of a school is equated with the posting of a teacher and same is the case with 'ashram' schools. Though the demand for changing the content and curriculum to suit the tribal context has been an old one, no serious effort has been made in this direction in any state, except for some sporadic pilot projects. The uniform structure and transaction of curriculum has put tribal children at a disadvantage.

Apart from all this lack of awareness of the teachers about tribal culture and environment also force the tribal students to withdraw from education. All these issues are emerging in their primary and high school levels. These constraints force them to drop-out their education at very early levels and higher education will be only a dream for them.

Factors Affecting Tribal Education

Attitude of other students: It is the one of the important factor which affect the promotion of tribal students in higher education.

Social Factor: There is a still a wide spread feeling among the tribal is that education make their off- spring deviant, insolent and alien them from the rest of their society. Since some of the tribal educated boys felt alienated and cut off their bonds with their families and villages after getting education and good education.

Economic Factors: Identifying the problems of tribal students. Some factors like most of the tribal children were engaged in crucial family work like cattle grazing, labor on work sites, collecting fire wood and other minor forest products, stone quarrying, mining and home based work such as processing forest products. The level of utilization of technology in the tribal area has remained abysmally low.

Lack of Interest in Formal Education - The other problem faced by them was lack of academic help from the teachers, non availability of teachers are the major reason. For this in most of the states, the medium of instruction was regional language; most tribal children's do not understand the text books,

Which were generally in the regional language According to Vinoba Gautam (2003) focused his study on education of tribal children in India reveals that the appointment of non-tribal teacher in tribal children schools, the teacher couldn't know the language of the children speaks and children couldn't understand the teachers language.

According to Desai.B & Patel.A (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 strength and in some cases the educational qualification of the teacher was below X, which also adversely affect the student achievement.

Lack of Facilities: Vijaya Lakshmi (2003) conducted the study on identify the problem of tribal students in Secondary Schools. The finding of the study reveals that the residential schools are Very poor in infrastructural facilities, poor hygiene and poor noon meal program.

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Nature of Habitat: Most of the tribal villagers are scattered. This entails long travel to attend school. Environment of Family- The surrounding or Environment is one of the important factors influenced for the development of the person. Most of the tribal are illiterates and tribal fathers are addicted to alcohol and other beverages which adversely affect the economic status of the family. Jayawal,et .al (2003) examined the role of parental support on academic achievements of tribal students, the study found that the parent of higher achievers exerted significantly more support to their children. On the other hand the parents of lower achievers were not strongly ambitious of children's upward mobility.

Co-operation from stake holders: Co-operation is essential for promoting education in the case of tribal students. Their funds are flowing through a number of person's hands and at last it will reach student hand. The delay and flow of fund creating problems in their education. Bhargava.S.M (1989) conducted survey on education for weaker section; the study found that the educational facilities for scheduled caste tribe are poorer in comparison to others in the district related to textbook, free uniform, stipends and mid day meals.

Low socio-economic status: - Tribals enjoy low socio-economic status. Miller (1988) has identified four major classes of variables such as cognitive variables, physical variables and motivational variables where disadvantaged learners show poor performance as compared with the advantaged groups.

Tribal concepts of pleasure: - Tribals are giving more importance for their pleasure such as dance, music and other types of entertainments prevalent in the society.

Existence of ethnic stereotypes: - Stereo typing is a natural and inevitable. It helps us to organize life. But such typing turns in to prejudice or stereotypes when based on little facts and it is used as a mechanism to establish the myth of racial or cultural superiority.

Tribal concept of learning:- In most of the tribal cultures learning is an active pleasurable event mostly carried on among peers. But the existing system of education does not take in to account their learning style.

Linguistic problems:-Tribal languages, except a very few, belong to Austro-Asiatic language family and are different from dominant non tribal languages of India which belong either to the Indo European or the Dravidian family. In most of the time tribals face acute problems in language.

Problem of learning English: - Tribals need for English is great, they face problems in learning than their non-tribal counterparts. For tribals their typical use of regional languages interferes with English. For them English are 5th or 6th languages.

Problems in learning to read:-Tribals have long oral tradition. Their culture is oral. Their history, myths and traditions are orally handed down from generation to generation. Most of the language does not have scripts of their own; their oral tradition still continues to exist.

Psychological problems: - Financial problems of the tribals always make the tribals in a very depressed condition. They have lots of wants and but the means to satisfying them is very less. It leads to many psychological issues

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Academic and administrative problems: - Even though the number of programmes for the upliftment of tribal education is many, the percentage of people receiving these benefits is very less. Administrative authorities are always showing very neutral attitude towards the education of the tribals.

Indifferent attitude of tribal parents: - Tribal parents are mostly illiterate. They always show a very indifferent attitude towards the education of their children. They are interested in providing household responsibilities to their children a very early stage of their education. “The parents of these students do not have any relationship with the society outside and are unaware of the importance of education. All teachers are talented. Teaching such children is a herculean task”.

Indifferent attitude of tribal teachers: Teachers do not take much effort to improve the educational level of the tribal students. Lack of communication, high level of absenteeism in the class, bad result in study, lack of attention in classroom by the tribals are some of the factors that has increased the indifferent attitude of the teachers towards the tribal students.

Indifferent attitude of tribal students: Students clearly said don't like someone forcing me to get up early in the morning. So, I was unhappy to go to school... Subjects like Malayalam and Science are good for me, but, English, Hindi and Mathematics are very tough. I could not follow English and Hindi classes. Whenever I commit mistakes, in front of others, teachers used to scold me, beat and pinch my ears. You ask others; almost 90% of the children have similar experiences. See, their beating caused swelling on my legs. Moreover, the staffs ridicule us by calling , adivasi Fed up with all these, my two friends and I decided to run away from the school. One day, we climbed on the compound wall and got on to the branch of a tree outside that was almost touching the compound wall, climbed down, and somehow or other managed to reach our settlement”.

Suggestions

1. Teachers shall build-up and maintain a close relationship with each student for their holistic development.
2. Teachers who can speak and understand the tribal language are to be appointed or the present teachers shall be study the tribal dialect.
3. Educated tribal youth shall be recruited as a teacher and posted in the tribal schools especially in lower classes.
4. Teachers who are working in tribal areas should undergo through a short orientation course in tribal development and culture.
5. In planning for tribal education the traditional technique of education of various tribal communities and their cultural traits should be taken into consideration and incorporated as far as possible.
6. The content of education should boost their cultural norms so as to make them proud of their culture, rather than embarrassing them. The kind of education provided now does not take into consideration of this aspect. The syllabus may also include vocational training courses suitable to the children.
7. Since theses tribal children are very active in extra-curricular activities, those who can perform well in such activities can be given special coaching/training and they may be fine- tuned to get careers in the field of sports and Arts.
8. Incorporation of the Non-formal education will be more appropriate in the case of disadvantage groups like tribes, because it is more learner's centred than formal

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education system. And the curriculum is also flexible according to the learner's age, culture, language, needs and problems. So this type of learning can moderate the adjustment problems of the students to an extent.

9. Vocational institutions should be implemented for tribal students for creation of new avenues. Singh and Ohri (1993) opined in their study that the educational status of tribal should be improved. Their study suggested that as a result of modernization, education and social change among tribal have improved better. Identifying tribal groups for initiating innovative educational programme at the micro level, conducting state wise and district wise survey causes of non enrollment of girl child in tribal communities in order to achieve the goals of universalization of elementary education, studying the problems of drop out, wastage and stagnation among tribal girls in schools and examine their occupational mobility. The role of mass media also needs to be assessed in the educational development of tribal.
10. High level official should check the functioning of schools frequently relating to the teaching method, working hours, functioning of school and attendance register. Residential facilities with all amenities should provide to teachers and other staffs.

CONCLUSION

Article 46 of the Indian Constitution stress to promote the scheduled tribes and scheduled caste people with special care in the educational and economic establishment. The spread of education among the scheduled tribes during the last four decades has been quite uneven. Ignorance and illiteracy among tribal should be minimized and routed out by providing proper education of tribal's. To improve the educational status of the tribal the opportunities for basic and adult education with training leading to better employment should be provided. Hostel facilities to tribal students should be surveyed and improved. Tribal welfare department may design and launch new programs to generate employment opportunities for tribal. The Director of employment and training may provide effective career guidance service to the tribal students so as to help them to make self assessment of these abilities, aptitudes and plan for the career. Ensuring of high quality education to tribal students. Pre-primary education and residential education will be strengthened further. The existing tuition scheme will be modified to cater the needs of all tribal students. The rate of scholarship will be revised frequently. High priority for the completion of pre-metric hostels and improving of their infrastructure facilities and revision of mess charges extra. Massive awareness and literacy program with involvement of NGO's will be organized in the tribal areas. The program saying that improving the brilliance of talented scheduled tribe students will be formulated and implemented.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interests.

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