

Tribal Education in India: Causes for Backwardness

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Abstract

This present article journal is a conceptual frame work and understanding related to tribal education in India scenario by the guide and researcher conducted study with both primary and secondary sources of data. The present structure of the society and its diversity within the cave of caste system in India projected through critical analysis. Integration of development theory and practices contextually in India and special need focusing towards the tribal education policy prospects and need also. The first hand experience of different social reformers, educates and the researchers' perceptions are also critically examined with statement forms in the article journal. Suggestions and need based education in the provision of Indian constitutions are drawn time to time in order to strengthen the need based education specific to Tribal Education system of India. Lastly the suggestions are also given for the uplift of the provision as tribal education of India. However, based on the analysis of the factors contributing to non enrolment and/or dropout and descriptions of case studies, it is evident that there needs to be more philanthropic investment outside the classroom too. This would provide a solid foundation that leverages these assets and develops stronger individual potential that can transcend the barriers experienced by tribals today.

Keywords: Education, Tribal Education, Tribal Education Causes for Backwardness., etc.

Introduction

Education from elementary level to technical higher education can able to bring the world to a single platform where competency and individual potentiality give the worth of living. The Vision 2020 of India and the competitive challenges in globalization race of the world meet the platform of development. Human rights abuse is 'normal' in most of our countries. Many people have been killed, maimed and tortured. Peaceful demonstrations are stopped with guns by the authorities. Evidence abounds in most countries for everybody to see. The judicial system in most of our countries lacks the needed independence and fairness. Judges who do not kowtow to the whims and fancies of the government in power are either sacked or murdered under mysterious circumstances. Most suspects do not get fair trials in court and many unfortunate citizens are imprisoned even without trial. Political opponents are often they said victims of this abuse of human rights. Most governments in our part of the world have monopolized state press and electronic media, and deciding on which news item is to be published/aired or not. Most often the parties of the other side of the political divide are prevented from benefiting from these facilities without censorship. They are never seen as alternative future governments but as political enemies. Due to the high cost of education, poverty and lack of materials and (school) structures, our cities are full of street children, who end their day sleeping on verandahs and Kiosks, not knowing where the next meal will come from. On the 50th anniversary, 10th December 1998, we resolved to treasure and uphold the tenets of the Universal Human Rights Declaration for the benefit of all and resist human rights violations of any kind wherever they may rear their ugly heads, let us keep that pledge. "You can only kill the messengers. You cannot kill the message."

Ken Saro – Wiwa

Failure to end the global crisis in education makes sustainable development impossible by denying nearly a billion people the ability to make informed choices about their lives, their families and their societies. The Plan of Implementation for the World Summit on Sustainable Development recognizes that education is critical to sustainable development, and reiterates existing international commitments to the Education for All goals and strategies agreed in Jorntien in 1990 and again in Dakar in 2000 - including universal primary education by 2015. However, the world leaders gathered in Johannesburg must do more than repeat old promises. Two years after Dakar, aid to education still languishes at pitifully low levels and 125 million children are still out of school (UNESCO report 2002, Bangkok) . In order to ensure that all girls and boys can complete a full course of schooling, governments attending the summit must take decisive new steps to deliver on the promises they have already made. The Global Campaign for Education, a broad alliance of child rights activists, NGOs, and public sector and teachers' unions, with members in more than 150 countries, demands that in World Conference, Johannesburg(14-18 April 2002): Education is a right, yet it is still denied to 61 million children who are out of school and to 7775 million adults who are not able to read and write. There is some progress in providing care and education

for very young children, but not enough, despite the clear benefits. Great strides have been made since 2000 to improve access to primary school, but a wide gap remains between enrolment and completion rates, especially for children from the poorest households and marginalized groups. The gender parity goal, set for 2005, has been missed, and concerns about the quality of education are emerging everywhere.

To reach EFA efforts need to be accelerated and more focused, with donors also making greater effort to harmonise procedures and align themselves with national policies. Public spending on basic education clearly needs to increase, but so does international aid. Education is one of the primary agents of transformation towards development. Education is in fact, an input not only for economic development of tribes but also for inner strength of the tribal communities which helps them in meeting the new challenges of life.

Government Intervention

- **Eklavya Model School:** Residential School based on Navodaya Model to be opened in each tribal block by 2022.
- **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
- Pre and Post Matric Scholarship Schemes
- **Vocational Training Center in Tribal Areas:** The aim of this scheme is to develop the skill of ST students depending on their qualification and present market trends.

Recommendations

- **Kothari Commission** stressed to pay special attention to the education of ST.
- **XaXa Committee recommended** greater focus on removing gender disparity in education.
- **Awareness Campaigns** like street drama, Camps Counselling session to bring attitudinal change in Parents.
- Emphasis should be given to career or job oriented course.
- Teachers should be locally recruited who understand and respect tribal culture and practices and most importantly are acquainted with the local language.

Backdrop of Tribal Education

The Fifth Schedule of the constitution mainly states the provision to the administration and control of scheduled areas and scheduled tribes such as: Executive power of a State in Scheduled Areas; Role of Governor in the administration of Scheduled Areas; Constitution and function of Tribes Advisory Council; Law applicable to Scheduled Areas; and Amendment of the Schedule. The Sixth Schedule of the constitution, under Articles 244(2) and 275(1) of the constitution mainly states the "Provisions as to the Administration of Tribal Areas in the States of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram", inter alia, with reference to: Autonomous districts and autonomous regions; constitution of District Councils and Regional Councils; Powers of the District Councils and Regional Councils to make laws; Administration of justice in autonomous districts and autonomous regions; Powers of the District Council to establish primary schools, etc.; Powers to assess and collect land revenue and to impose taxes; suspension of acts and resolutions of District and Regional Councils; Dissolution of a District or a Regional Council.

Education of Scheduled Tribe Children

Scheduled tribes constitute the statutorily weaker section of society and form a distinct target group under the existing pattern of planning. Due to determined efforts of the government at the central and state levels, the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of ST children has increased considerably at elementary levels of education, even more as compared to their non-tribal counterparts, e.g. the (GER) of ST children at primary stage is 137 as against 116 of their non-tribal counterparts. The corresponding figures for Upper Primary stage are 88.9 as against 85.5; and for elementary stage are 119.7 as against 104.3 (Statistics for School Education 2010-2011). Thus, the participation of these children is now more or less in proportion to their share in population at the elementary school level. Dropouts, though declining over years, are significantly large at this level: the dropout rate of ST children at primary school level is 35.6% as against 27% of their non-tribal counterparts.

Universalisation of Education

After independence, education of people became the responsibility of the states while the central government's only obligation was to coordinate technical and higher education. A commission under the chairmanship of Dr D.S. Kothari was set up in 1964 (Parthasarthy, 1992: 94), and free and compulsory education was first mooted by this commission. Later, the idea was passionately argued for by former Union Education Minister M.C. Chagla and in 1976, the 42nd Constitutional Amendment Act made education a joint responsibility of the states and the Centre, putting it as a subject into the Concurrent List of the Constitution in the Seventh Schedule. The National Policy on Education (NPE) of 1986 and a Revised Programme of Action (POA) of 1992 envisioned that free and compulsory education should be provided for all children up to 14 years before the commencement of the twenty-first century. The Government of India committed itself to spending 6 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on education by the year 2000, and half of this was to be spent on providing education at primary level (Ghosh, 2000:

178–9). Looking at various commissions² and the Twenty Years Programme (see Government of India, 1986) of compulsory primary education, especially with regard to their impact on interaction with socio-economic problems among STs, a certain pattern emerges. The policies formulated by the central government do not have sufficient direct relevance to tribal groups. These ambitious plans and programmes may be common to the entire nation and are part of a national infrastructure, but are often devised in complete isolation from local realities. In some cases, local perceptions may have been accepted in principle and incorporated into the design itself. For example, some schemes for illiteracy eradication, drawn up within an all-India framework, have adapted some services to local needs. To understand what is really going on at ground level, though, fieldwork is essential. Constitutional safeguards and national policies in India have increasingly focused on human rights concerns and stress universalisation of elementary education. It is reflected in the Constitution (Eighty-Sixth Amendment Act of 2002), which introduced a new sub-article 21-A (Right to Education), providing '[t]he State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years in such manner as the State may, by law, determine'. While it still leaves a lot of discretion to the state in terms of how to implement such fundamental rights provisions, this more recent additional safeguard reflects that a major goal of the Indian Constitution remains to achieve better social justice. Moreover, under international pressure, the global Millennium Development Goals also expect significant progress to happen in India by 2015. In addition, among the Directive Principles of State Policy too, Article 46 (Promotion of educational and economic interests of Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribes and other weaker sections) of the Indian Constitution (1950) proclaims that '[t]he State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation'

Educational Issues and Concerns

The situation of education of tribal children is related to the quality of education in general, and not solely to being tribal. Of course being a tribal also means that most of the time they are also poor; they live in areas where the provision of education is very weak. So the situation is not only because they are tribals but because of various inter-related issues. Empirical evidence suggests that tribal children possess the basic cognitive abilities and psychological dispositions for successful participation in schools; and their low achievement levels are attributed to school-related variables as would apply to non-tribal students (Gautam, 2003; Reported in Bagai and Nundy, 2009, p.11). Poor performance of tribal students and the below average situation of primary education in tribal areas is driven by inter-related factors, which can broadly be grouped in to: (i) internal factors; and (ii) external factors.

Internal Factors

Internal factors are intrinsic to the structure of the education system, e.g. content and pedagogy, teacher absenteeism and attitude, language of instruction, incentives, limited ownership of education by the community, and can be addressed through appropriate programs.

Medium of Instruction

Language has been the biggest constraints in tribal education. All the curriculum and teachers module are designed in official/regional language which is alien for tribal student.

- **Economic Condition:** The economic condition of tribal people is so poor that they do not desire to spare their children or their labour power and allow them to attend schools.
- **Teacher Absenteeism:** In the remote tribal areas the teacher absenteeism is a regular phenomenon and this affects largely the quality of education.
- **Attitude of the Parents:** As education does not yield any immediate economic return, the tribal parents prefer to engage their children in remunerative employment which supplements the family income.
- **Infrastructural Challenges:** Most of the schools located in tribal areas have minimal infrastructural facilities. These schools are not equipped with teaching learning materials, study materials, even minimum sanitary provisions are not maintained.

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. At the same time, the local tribal community must be empowered, as partners, with a sense of true ownership of the initiative. New and comprehensive ways of engaging communities and/or eliciting participation from communities have to be explored constantly, keeping in mind the changing needs of the community. 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, E.g. planning exercise; construction of school building; documentation of local folklore, history, traditional medicine etc.; interaction between and amongst the participants, through motivation. Instill Sense of

Accountability and Ownership among Children 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 teaching learning materials, promotion of enrolment, school supervision and monitoring. Empower Communities: Communities should be empowered to demand appropriate and quality education services from the government through a multi-pronged strategy.

Conclusion

Education is the single most important means by which individuals and society can build capacity levels, overcome barriers, and expand opportunities for their well being. In the context of education of tribal children, finding a balance between preserving tribal cultural identity and mainstreaming them seems crucial. It means building education programs that ensure a tribal child's success in mainstream schools. It is seen that the current education system is mostly designed for the dominant group. Hence, there needs to be investment in creating support mechanisms that supplement the integration of tribal children into the formal education system. The support within the education system may include: 1. Using both tribal and state languages during the pre-primary and primary levels 2. Creating supplementary tribal relevant learning materials 3. Introducing monetary/non-monetary incentives for teachers in tribal areas 4. Addressing the health and nutritional needs of tribal children 5. Improving community participation by training tribal teachers and youth 6. Establishing transitional education centres, which focus on mainstreaming tribal children 7. Creating seasonal hostels and residential schools for children of migratory parents. The support mechanisms listed above address some of the issues facing tribal children inside the classroom. However, based on the analysis of the factors contributing to non-enrolment and/or dropout and descriptions of case studies, it is evident that there needs to be more philanthropic investment outside the classroom too. This would provide a solid foundation that leverages these assets and develops stronger individual potential that can transcend the barriers experienced by tribal's today.

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