

EDUCATION AMONG TRIBES: PROBLEM, ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

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ABSTRACT

Access to education is a fundamental right that ought to be granted to all. Many Indian tribal tribes continue to face obstacles in their quest for this basic right, particularly those who reside in isolated and neglected locations. The issues facing these groups are multifaceted. Some reasons are rooted in socioeconomic, cultural, and historical aspects. In distant areas, indigenous children's education encounters numerous obstacles. The absence of adequate roads and transit infrastructure makes it challenging for kids to attend school. Children may get disinterested if the unique languages, cultures, and customs have to adapt to the mainstream system of education. The issue is made worse by the lack of textbooks and other educational resources available in the community's native tongue. Inadequate classrooms, schools, and other infrastructure such as basic amenities in many tribal areas also negatively impacts the learning environment and puts impoverished children's safety at risk. Parents are frequently reluctant to send their kids to school if there are inadequate sanitary facilities and unsafe school buildings. Tribal communities are rife with poverty, with many families finding it difficult to make ends meet. Attending school becomes less important when surviving becomes the first objective. It is indeed a great task to help the tribal communities to impart good quality education. Accessing tribal education and the facilities of government is of prime concern. The present paper has aimed to highlight the problems, issues and challenges belonging to tribal education in India.

Keywords: Indigenous, Tribal communities, amenities, impoverished, learning environment.

INTRODUCTION

One of the most important prerequisites for creating a human resource and establishing nations is education. Education and skill development are of utmost importance for the development of human resources. Education transfers character, abilities, and knowledge. Following independence, Indian governments place emphasis on Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic—as part of their literacy missions to meet the requirements of the Directive Principles of State Policy. In light of the New Education Policy, which is anticipated to be introduced soon, the study critically evaluates the data and state of education in India's tribes. Children may get disinterested if the unique languages, cultures, and customs have to conform to the mainstream educational system. The issue is worsened by the lack of textbooks and other educational resources in the community's native tongue. Inadequate classrooms, schools, and other infrastructure such as basic amenities in many tribal areas also negatively impact the learning environment and put impoverished children's safety at risk. Parents are frequently reluctant to send their kids to school if there are inadequate sanitary facilities and unsafe school buildings. Tribal communities are rife with poverty, with many families finding it difficult to make ends meet. Attending school becomes less important when surviving becomes the first objective. Due to restricted economic options and the requirement that children contribute to home revenue, youngsters are forced into adopt the family occupation.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

It is a great effort to get over these challenges and give underprivileged kids a better future. Their creative methods of closing the achievement gap are incredibly motivating and give hope for a brighter future. Sujatha examined the education among the tribal population of India(1). The study conducted by Pradhan and Pattanaik (2011) revealed that tribal students had not shown interest in pursuing formal education in their native languages as it might not help them to expand their knowledge(2). Classroom transactions ought to be such that they show respect for the child's language, identity and social background. Scheduled Tribes are marginalized communities based on geography, social status, and economic status. The tribes' educational achievement is significantly worse than that of the Scheduled Castes, notwithstanding these efforts. Dropouts have resulted from this, which negatively affected their general educational position. Educational Status among the Scheduled Tribes: Issues and Challenges was studied by Brahmanandam and Bosu Babu(3). The Issues and challenges of Tribal Education in India was investigated by Upmanyu(4). Some of the Barriers in higher education of the tribals in Telangana, India studied by Lingami and Yadagiri(5). An effort to study the schemes, policies and programmes undertaken by the government of India for the overall growth and development of tribal communities was studied by Rajkumar(6). Tribal communities in India have been dealing with several issues in their daily affairs and struggling for the necessities of day-to-day life. Tribal development has always been a matter of great concern for the governments of both union and states. The government has made a non-stop effort to bridge the gap towards the development and sustainable growth of the tribal community as a whole. The literature review gives an insight into the challenges and issues of tribal education in India as worked by various researchers

Tribal Population:

The Indian Constitution designates Scheduled Tribes (STs) as those ethnic minority groups, usually called tribes or tribals, which were approximately 8% of the nation's total population and are entitled to special attention. There are 573 STs spread around the nation. The languages spoken by a majority of tribal communities differ from those of the states which they are found. Over 270 languages are among them. They are found in many states and union territories, making up the great majority. There are hundreds of tribes, and there are thousands in others. In Mizoram, Lakshadweep, Nagaland, and Meghalaya, they make up the majority. Eighty-three per cent of the total is made up of the states of Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Bihar, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, and West Bengal

The recommendations of the National Policy on Education (NPE) in 1986, which included the following among other things, marked a second significant shift in the policy of the education of aboriginal peoples.(7) The establishment of elementary schools in tribal communities will take precedence. Curriculum and teaching materials must be created in tribal languages in the beginning, with plans in place for the transition to regional languages. Youths from the ST will be encouraged to pursue careers as teachers in tribal communities. There will be a significant expansion of residential/ashram schools in tribal communities. Taking into account their unique demands and way of life, incentive programs will be developed specifically for the STs.

Problems, Issues and Challenges related to Tribal Education: Tribal children's educational circumstances are not just a function of their tribal heritage; they also have to do with the overall standard of education. Being a tribe member also means that one is impoverished, having to live in locations with very little access to schooling. Thus, the situation is caused by many interconnected problems in addition to the fact that they are tribal people. Based on empirical evidence, it appears that tribal children have the necessary cognitive skills and psychological make-up to participate successfully in school; the reasons for their low achievement are similar to those given to non-tribal students and are related to the school (8, 9). Some of the problems, Issues and Challenges related to Tribal Education are:

1. **Scattered dwelling environments:** The tribe population located in India are usually interior, and remote. In addition, the tribal population are also found in the corners of the forest, mountains regions which is not connected to the mainstream population.

2. **Communication:** The fear of tribal children towards the teacher, and their inability to establish a communication link with the teacher and it is reflected in low attendance and high dropout rates. The regional language as the medium of instruction could be a solution.
3. **Inability to understand the language taught in the classroom:** The Constitution of India allows the use of tribal dialect (mother tongue) as the medium of instruction when the population of the tribe is more than one lakh. However, this has not been adopted on the grounds of feasibility and viability of introducing and sustaining such a change.
4. **Cultural and Socioeconomic Restraints:** These socio-economic and cultural elements can be broadly defined as follows: social conventions, cultural ethos, poverty and bad economic situations, lack of knowledge and comprehension of the need of formal education, conflict and the divide between the home and school, etc. Research on tribal people's lack of access to education has inextricably connected it to their impoverished living conditions. Tribal people mostly work in agriculture, either in terraced or shifting agriculture, both of which have relatively poor yield.
5. **Economical reasons:** Children are significant members of the family, either directly or indirectly via their employment in the family business and home chores like gathering firewood and fodder and grazing animals.
6. **Neglect in quality of facilities given in the schools:** even though incentives like slates and uniforms are given, they are of poor quality and do not reach in time, thus nullifying the entire purpose. It should be noted that the impoverished economic status of tribals makes even the small amount of private expenditure involved in procuring writing material, clothing, etc a serious burden on the family. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising if education is not given priority.
7. **Disregard for the quality of facilities provided in schools:** when rewards such as uniforms and slates are offered, they are of low quality and arrive late, defeating the purpose entirely. Note that tribal families are severely impacted by even little private expenses for things like clothes, writing supplies, and other necessities due to their extremely low economic standing.
8. **Limited Participation:** There aren't many possibilities in an economy where people are always fighting to survive. Native Americans have limited educational opportunities because they do not envision the future beyond their current circumstances and education does not yield any immediate or obvious benefits.
9. **Lack of Opportunity:** Since the majority of unenrolled children must work in families or family-related jobs, there is a low participation rate due to the opportunity cost involved. Even while children only indirectly contribute financially, they undoubtedly make it easier for parents to engage in the economy.

Strategies for attaining Tribal Education Success:

1. **All-encompassing strategy:** a thorough strategy to address the issues that India's tribal groups are experiencing. Education must be woven into the needs, goals, and culture of the community; it cannot live in a vacuum.
2. **Programs centered on community** engagement, cultural sensitivity, and inclusivity—the three foundations of a better future. creating a curriculum that is culturally sensitive and takes into account the languages and settings of the community.
3. **Through Teachers Training**, learning becomes more relevant and interesting for the kids as they discover familiarity and relevance in the material. Tribal language training for teachers: Teachers training is to be offered in order to make sure they are aware of the special requirements of tribal children.
4. **Vocational Training:** Training aimed at providing practical skills to youngsters from indigenous communities. This strategy is essential because it breaks the cycle of poverty by creating chances for work and money generating.
5. **Maintaining educational development** also requires bolstering teacher motivation, competency building, and skill development. Since the teacher should be at the center of educational reform, they should continue to be the main facilitator.
6. **Program sustainability:** Assisting tribal communities in making decisions and carrying out the program. This strategy guarantees ownership, fosters trust, and makes the projects long-term sustainable.
7. **Environment Building:** In the framework of tribal communities' educational development, environment building is crucial. Its essential components, community mobilization and awareness, ought to be given enough weight and consideration.
8. **Decentralization:** Another factor that requires particular attention in the context of tribal territories is the decentralization of education management. Restructuring the current educational management system is essential given the physical geography and communication challenges in tribal communities.

CONCLUSION

In India, tribal education is a major concern since more people should have access to the necessary education. Tribal education is beset by a plethora of challenges and dilemmas. The response to these improves the tribal education standards in India. These also address a few other inquiries about education among indigenous people. High-quality education for the dispersed indigenous people would be ensured by effective administration of these. Education is the most important means by which individuals and society may develop new abilities, overcome challenges, and improve prospects for their well-being. It's clear that when it comes to their education, a balance has been struck between integrating ST children into society and preserving their tribal traditional identity. It means creating educational programs that ensure the academic advancement of an indigenous child in conventional schools.

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