



IMPACT OF RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS AND CURRENT CHALLENGING ISSUES OF TRIBAL EDUCATION IN ODISHA

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Abstract

The objective of the paper is to analyse the status of tribal education with literacy rate, comparison of literacy rate among STs and all Social groups during the period from 1961 to 2011 and the existing gap. Also in the same time the paper tried to highlight the current challenges of most disadvantaged group in the most rural and tribal pocket of Odisha in particular reference to the education sector. Here the researcher also tried to highlight some influential steps taken by state and central govt. of India to minimise the gap and tried to solve the ongoing problems, the step like residential schools are taken in to consideration in this particular paper amongst many steps implemented by govt. The analysis is based on secondary data of Census of India, 2011 and different reports of govt. and non govt. organisations along with own observation in this field as a researcher. To justify above objectives three research questions are framed with correlating the present thrust or objectives of the paper. The researcher found that

Key Words: Residential school, Current challenges, Issues, Odisha and Tribe etc.



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Introduction

Education is the key to all round human development. A nation's economic, social and cultural progress is determined by the education development of its citizens. India is a pluralist country with rich diversity reflected in the multitude of cultures, religions and languages of various groups. There is however large disparity in the socio-economic parameters of various groups/communities residing in the country. Some groups notably the Scheduled Tribes have been traditionally marginalized and economically backward in relation to the total population of the country. Educational development is the most effective instrument for their empowerment and has the potential to help the marginalized and the poor to come out of the poverty trap and facilitate them to be at par with the rest of the citizens.

Recognizing the importance of education, the Government of India has been initiating efforts to achieve education for all, particularly to the groups which have lagged on the economic scale. A major step was taken in 2002 when by virtue of the 86th amendment to the Constitution Article 21A was inserted making free and compulsory education to the children of 6-14 years age group as fundamental right. In pursuance thereof, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, a flagship programme was launched for achievement of universal elementary education in a time bound manner. It had a special focus on education of tribal children with different reference to the many provisions made by central as well state government i.e. are the provision of expenditure up to Rupees 15 lakh per year each given in the norms can be used for taking up innovative interventions relating to girls education and education of SC/ST children under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, along with that also the following provisions have been made for girls education and education of SC/ST children: Interventions for Early Childhood Care and Education, EGS like alternative facility to be setup within one kilometer of all habitations, Up-gradation of EGS to regular school, Special mainstreaming Mahila Samakhya like interventions from the innovation fund, provision of process-based community participation with a focus on the participation of women and SC/ST etc. Recently the Right to Education (RTE) of children to free and compulsory education was enacted on 04.08.2009 which describes the modalities of importance of free and compulsory education for children between 6 to 14 years. The RTE Act provides for children's right to free and compulsory admission, attendance and completion of elementary education. It would be critical, therefore, to consider aspects that prevent children from weaker sections and disadvantaged groups, as also girls, from completing elementary education. Secondly, the Act provides for the child's right to education that is free from fear, stress and anxiety. There are several provisions in the Act, including for example, provisions prohibiting corporal punishment, detention and expulsion which need to be fore fronted in SSA interventions to ensure that we move towards a system that provides a warm, welcoming and encouraging approach for children to learn.

For the disadvantaged group the Ministry of HRD is mandated to promote education in the country and taken measures to promote them. Education deprivation of ST children through creating better provisions, relaxing norms for opening primary schools in tribal areas by, establishing residential facilities, opening Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBVs), Ashram Schools, Eklavya Model Residential Schools and Vocational Training Centre for promoting higher learning by providing monetary incentives in the form of scholarships such as Pre Matric Scholarship, Post Matric Scholarship (PMS), Scholarship for

Top Class Education, Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship and National Overseas Scholarship for ST students.

Review of related literature

There exists a substantial amount of literature on the condition of tribal education in India. A brief review is worthwhile in order to highlight what has already been done in the field. In a study on tribes of Andhra Pradesh, **K. Sujatha (1994)** contends that the perspective adopted for educational development of tribal communities fails to adequately address the specific disadvantages characterizing the tribal population. She found that one of the major constraints of tribal education at the planning level is the adoption of a dual system of administration. **Jha&Jhingran, D. (2002)** have strongly advocated the use of the mother tongue or home language as medium of instruction in early stages of education. This assumes greater significance in the context of education of tribal children because their mother tongue is often quite distinct from the prominent languages in the state or regional languages and it is desirable to have a local teacher from the same tribal community. **Lal, M. (2005)** found that among all school dropouts, Adivasis and Dalits form the biggest group. Further, the largest group amongst them is girls. Education, thus for the weaker sections of the society needs to become the panacea and an inclusive growth strategy for their economic and social upliftment. Education has special significance for the SCs and STs who are facing a new situation in the development process. Aboriginal people had a sense of connectedness with everything in their universe; other people, the plants, the animals, the rocks, the water, the stars, the moon, the sun and their accompanying spirits. Through song, dance, prayer, ceremony, and other processes of sharing, all were honoured and respected (**Cajete, 1999; Cajete, 2000; Dumont, 1989; Mussell et al, 1991; Peacock & Wisuri, 2002**). Cajete , reiterates that the ultimate purpose of story-telling was to show the connection between things and; Stories told about creativity – about how things came to be. Residential schools had a specific goal which was . . . institutionalized assimilation by stripping Aboriginal people of their language, culture and connection with family. the results for many, have included a lifestyle of uncertain identity and the adoption of self-abusive behaviours, often associated with alcohol and violence, reflect a pattern of coping sometimes referred to in First Nations as, “The Residential School Syndrome” (**McKenzie & Morrissette, 2003, p.254**).

Rational of the study:

Education, especially in its elementary form, is considered of utmost importance to the tribals because it's crucial for total development of tribal communities and is particularly helpful to build confidence among the tribes to deal with outsiders on equal terms. Despite the sincere

and concerted efforts by the government for the overall development of the scheduled tribes, they are still far behind in almost all the standard parameters of development. They are not able to participate in the process of development, as they are not aware of most of the programmers and policies made for their upliftment. This is mainly due to the high incidence of illiteracy and very low level of education among the tribal people. Hence, the educational status of the scheduled tribes and the role of governance in this direction are highly essential. It is well known that the educational background of tribes is very discouraging as compared to the rest of the population. So, education is an important avenue for upgrading the economic and social conditions of the Scheduled Tribes.

Research question

The present study addressing with following research questions:

1. Whether there is any gap between literacy rate among STs and all Social groups during the period from 1961 to 2011?
2. What are the current challenges and issues behind the tribal parents for education of their children?
3. Whether there is any positive or negative impact of residential schools on tribal life and culture
4. What are possible suggestions for permanent solution of these problems?

Objectives

The present study addressed with following objectives

1. To give a comparison of literacy rate among STs and all Social groups during the period from 1961 to 2011 and the existing gap.
2. To highlight current challenges and issues behind the tribal parents for education of their children
3. To find out impact of residential schools on tribal life and culture
4. To make some suggestions for finding out solution of these ongoing problems

Methodology of the study

Methodology

Descriptive survey method used in the study as the investigators tried to get information about more than one variable also with better understanding of perceptions of stakeholders (Hittleman and Simon, 1997). Through this method information about conditions, situations and events that occur in the present can be obtained (UNESCO, 2005). Therefore, in the present study the investigator used this method to explore all possibilities to highlight,

measure the impact of residential schools and issues with regarding to the tribal employment and education, Also the problems and its eradication from the root.

Secondary data collection

The sources of secondary data are the published and unpublished reports. Data from secondary sources were gathered from books, articles, journals, published reports, and Government documents. The Quantitative information was collected with regard to current impact of residential schools and other different problems which are main hindrances in the path of tribal education.

Discussion

Comparison of literacy rate among STs and all Social groups during the period from 1961 to 2011 Vs. the existing gap

The following table gives a comparison of literacy rate among STs and all Social groups during the period from 1961 to 2011 and the existing gap.

Literate among STs and all Social Groups

Year	STs Percentage			All Social Groups			
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Gap%
1961	13.83	3.16	8.53	40.40	15.35	28.30	19.77
1971	17.63	4.85	11.30	45.96	21.97	34.45	23.15
1981	24.52	8.04	16.35	56.38	29.76	43.57	27.22
1991	40.65	18.19	29.60	64.13	39.29	52.21	22.61
2001	59.17	34.76	47.10	75.26	53.67	64.84	17.74
2011	68.53	49.35	58.96	80.89	64.64	72.99	14.03

On the basis of the above table it is crystal clear that the literacy rate for the total population in India has increased from 28.30% to 72.99% during the period from 1961-2011 whereas the literacy rate among the scheduled tribes has increased from 8.53% to 58.96%(census of India 2011). In the same time it is also observable that the gap between ST and all other social group is quite high that 14.03 so here it is matter of concern how this will be minimize in the next decades. It is mainly due to the economic condition of there parents, present attitude and faulty implementation strategy of govt. programmes in the rural tribal pockets of odisha.

Current challenges and issues behind the tribal parents for education of their children

On the basis of field experience in the tribal areas, there are many major issues and problems in the field of tribal education. They are as follows:

4.1 The Physical Location of the Village The tribes inhabit in the forests in a scattered manner. So, it becomes impossible to open up separate schools in each village where the required students strength is not available. On other land, tribal habitations remain segregated

from each other by some physical barriers like rivers, nalas and forests. So these physical barriers create a hindrance for the children of a tribal village to attend the school in a neighboring village. 4.2 Economic Condition: The tribes depend on forests for 8 months and on agriculture for 4 months. The children of 4 to 6 age group are found to be helping their parents in collection of forest products. In this situation, parents do not desire to spare their children or their labour power and allow them to attend schools.

4.3 Attitude of the parents: Tribal parents are basically illiterate. Their illiteracy does not permit them to understand the long term values of education. As education does not yield them any immediate economic return, they prefer to engage their children in remunerative employment which supplements the family income and strengthens the family economy. Further a few parents who have become aware of the values of education, fail to accord education to their children as they cannot afford finances for it.

4.4 Village Education Committee: In Odisha, VECs have been constituted to preserve and monitor the functioning of the schools. Till now tribes are not aware of the role of the VECs. Neither the villagers nor the members of the VECs take any active interest to enhance enrolment and attendance of tribal children in primary school.

Teacher Related Problems In tribal villages, villagers have virtually no relationship with the teachers. Teachers do not get any accommodation facility in the village, which makes them irregular which hampers the normal routine of a school. Further, the apathetic attitude of the villagers and the appointment of untrained teachers in tribal areas diminishes the values of education.

Impact of residential schools on tribal life and culture

Ashram School definitely uplifts the poor & deprived tribal children as tribal children are very poor and their parents can not just afford to send their children to school. Sending their children to school is a matter of economics for them which may dislocate their traditional pattern of division of labor. Poverty is a major contributing factor for their educational backwardness. It has been observed that parents of more than 60% children of the Ashram Schools are labourers, 20% are farmers, 10% are employees in the coal mines or Government Servant. Ashram Schools have evolved to cater the socio economic and educational needs of the tribal children by providing free boarding and lodging facilities. But an assessment of the children's educational expenditure other than fooding and lodging also include expenditure on purchase of note books, reference books and stationeries, dresses for student, money for better treatment in private hospital and traveling from home to school and back to home by the students during holidays and vacation, private tuition fees for various causes like

celebration of puja and picnic etc. These put economic pressures on parents though these are incidental expenses as viewed by some parents. Some of the other observations are described in the findings section of this study.

Suggestions for finding out solution of these ongoing problems

Followings are some of the suggestions for permanent changes of the present scenario in the tribal education sector:

Relevant study materials in local languages It is strongly suggested for use of the mother tongue or home language as medium of instruction in early stages of education. From the perspective of language, it is desirable to have a local teacher from the same tribal community.

Appointment of Local teachers The acceptance of teachers by the community as one of them is critical for increasing schooling participation in tribal areas. An understanding of and respect for tribal cultures and practices and some amount of familiarity with the local language are important for teachers to gain this acceptance. Hence it is suggested to appoint more tribal teachers in these areas.

Changes in perceptions and outlooks of teachers Teachers must be sensitized to the cultural and behavioral strengths of tribal children and motivated to do their best for them in schools. Incentives should be initiated to attract effective teachers to work in tribal schools and to retain them there. Only such motivated teachers are likely to generate interest among tribal children towards schools education.

Tribe specific learning arrangements Various tribal groups in India have different cultures. Various tribes within one State differ so much from each other in terms of ethnographic features that it is impossible to develop a learning system for them. Therefore there is a need to have tribe specific learning arrangements which make full use of tribal culture and tribal traditions.

Stipends and various scholarships Hostel facilities should be provided for tribal children away from their families is usually perceived as an additional stipend. Another important provision in the form of merit-scholarships, stipends and other attendance scholarships should be implemented.

KISS Model Educational provision through vocational education is needed to be strengthened. Vocational craft oriented education, education on games, sports; agriculture must be imparted to the students. Especially weak students may be promoted in that respect. Vocational training will instil confidence among students and their parents. The investigation

of the role and impacts of residential schools on Aboriginal traditional knowledge must be studied within the wider context of colonization and genocide.

Findings

Following are some of the major findings of the study

1. Some children never saw their families again, through death or not being able to go home during the summer. When they did go home – nothing was the same and they did not fit into community life.
2. The best years of their lives (their childhood) were taken away from them when they were incarcerated in the residential schools, where they had to work in all kinds of weather without proper attire.
3. The children had no one to turn to when they needed to be comforted. They had no one to tell them that they were loved.
4. These losses to the mental, emotional, physical and spiritual well-being of the children who attended residential schools have impacted our communities intergenerationally right up to the present day.
5. The residential schools taught Aboriginal children that the story-telling of their parents and grandparents and their Elders, were not true. The priests and nuns told the children that they were make-believe stories and they were to forget anything they were told by their relatives. Many legends and valuable histories of Aboriginal peoples were lost in this way (Assembly of First Nations, 1994; Chrisjohn & Young, 1997; Miller, 1996; Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996).
6. The residential schools taught Aboriginal children that their rituals, coming-of-age ceremonies, and seasonal ceremonies were works of the devil. Consequently, when many Aboriginal peoples left the schools, they did not want to have anything to do with their traditions or their culture
7. To Aboriginal peoples, their family, extended family, community and nation had been of utmost importance, now they were ashamed of their families and themselves for being Aboriginal
8. They were forbidden to speak their Aboriginal languages, under threat of corporal punishment. Their self-esteem was undermined when they were told that their languages were primitive. Many children forgot their languages and adopted the language of the dominant society.

9. An amendment to the Indian Act made school attendance compulsory for all Aboriginal children between the ages of seven and fifteen, which meant that children were forcibly removed from their homes to attend residential schools

Conclusion:

Education is the key to tribal development. Tribal children have very low levels of participation. Though the development of the tribes is taking place in India, but the pace of development has been rather slow. If govt. will not take some drastic steps for the development of tribal education, the status of education among tribes will be a story of distress, despair and death. Hence time has come to think it seriously about tribal education and inclusive growth. So, there is an urgent need for various govt. interventions, planners and policy makers to address this problem and allocate more funds in the central and state budgets for tribal education. Easy access and more opportunities should be provided to the tribal children in order to bring them to the mainstream of economic development.

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