# Education of Tribal Children in India

**A case study**

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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. The literacy scenario of the Scheduled tribes in general is below the literacy rate of the general population of the country. As per 2001 census the literacy rate among tribal (47.10%) is found to be far below the over all literacy of the country (64.84%). This paper focuses the education of tribal children and the hurdles they faces.**

***Keywords* – Tribal, Education, Literacy**

## Introduction

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. 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 they occupy same territory, speak the same languages, observe certain taboos regarding marriage, profession and have developed well assessed system of reciprocity and of obligation.

T.B .Naik has given the following features of tribes in Indian Context;

* A tribe should have least functional interdependence with in the community.
* It should be economically backward (i.e primitive means of exploiting natural resources, tribal economy should be at an under developed stage and it should have multifarious economic pursuit).
* There should be a comparative geographical isolation of its people.
* They should have a common dialect.
* Tribe should be politically organized and community panchayat should be influential.
* A tribe should have customary laws.

**Tribal Literacy in India** The population of Scheduled Tribes (ST) according to the 2001 census in 8.43 crores, constituting about 8.2% of the country’s total population grown at the rate of 24.45% during 1991-2001. Of this about 1.32 million (1.57%) belong to primitive Tribal groups. The percentage of population of the Scheduled Tribes varies among the states. The literacy scenario of the Scheduled tribes in general is below the literacy rate of the general population of the country. As per 2001 census the literacy rate among tribal (47.10%) is found to be far below the over all literacy of the country (64.84%). In Kerala the Scheduled Tribe population is 3, 641, 89 (2001 census), 1.1 % of the state population. The highest percentage of Scheduled Tribes in Wynad District forming 17.43% of tribal population in 2001 census, another 14% is in Idukki District. The literacy rate in the case Scheduled Tribes females, which is only 18.19% as against 39.23% for nonSC/ST women (i.e.) 8 out of every 10 Scheduled Tribe women are illiterate.

## 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 offspring deviant, insolent and alient 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-** Vijaya Lakshmi (2003) identifies the problems of tribal students. Some factors like most of the tribal children were engaged in crucial family work like cattle gazing, 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.
* **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.

**Objectives of the Study** In view of understanding the problems faced by the tribal students, the study is focused on the following objective

* To study the problems of students in the family and School that hinders the education.
* To identify the assistance given by the Government for tribal education and its Utilization.
* To suggest suitable remedial measures for the improvement of the prevailing situation regarding education.

## Research Methodology

India is one of the largest concentrations of tribal population in the world. According to the census of

2001, the tribal population in India is 67.76 million constitute 8.08% of the total population. There are about 449 tribes and sub-tribes in different parts of India. Most of the tribes live in well defined but isolated hilly areas which are often inaccessible, relatively underdeveloped and poorly integrated with the rest of the nation. Hence tribal communities in Marayoor and Kanthaloor panchayat, Idukki District also follow distinct culture.

The present study was conducted in Marayoor and Kanthaloor panchayat in Idukki district constitute of 12 tribal settlements. These settlements occupied by different tribal communities like Mudhuvans, Kurumbas and Hill Pulayas. The universe of 250 tribal children studying in Government School from two panchayats selected through simple random sampling method. The present study is based on primary data by administering an interview schedule. The interview schedule was first pretested to check for clarity and specificity and the necessary modification were made on the basis of the experience gained through pretesting. The collected data were tabulated and analyzed for the purpose of giving precise and concise information.

## Results & Discussions TABLE NO .1

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **REASON** | **FREQUENCY** | **(%)** |
| HEAVY SYLLABUS | 5 | 8 |
| TEACHER  FREQUENT  ABSENT | 15 | 25 |
| INADEQUATE  PARENT SUPPORT | 10 | 17 |
| LACK OF BUS  FACILITIES | 20 | 33 |
| POVERTY | 10 | 17 |
| TOTAL | 60 | 100 |

### Table no.1 Hurdles in pursuing Education

* Majority of the respondents (33%) states that there are no adequate bus facilities to reach School.
* Most of the tribes live in well defined but isolated hilly areas which are often inaccessible. So the tribal students are facing difficulty to reach school. They have to walk a longer distance to reach their school. In the young age the students find it very difficulty to walk several miles and learn. Most of the respondents (25%) reveal that the teachers in the tribal schools were being frequently absent.
* Most of the teachers willing to work only in urban and semi-urban area based schools. Lack of infrastructure facilities, communication system, transport facilities make them to hesitate to work with full fledge dedication in tribal areas. Most of the teachers working in tribal school have to travel 4 to 5 hours per day.
* Majority of the respondents (35%) feels that education will give better job opportunities to them.
* Scheduled tribes have many reservations in Government jobs. They will be given priority for Government jobs in forest department like forest guide, ranger.
* Most of the respondents (25%) feel that financial assistance (scholarship) from Government will motivate them to pursue their education.
* Both the central and state Government is providing Scholarship for scheduled tribes students from primary level of education to Doctorate level.

## TABLE NO.2

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **MOTIVATING FACTOR** | **FREQUENCY** | **(%)** |
| PARENT SUPPORT | 9 | 15 |
| TEACHERS SUPPORT | 6 | 10 |
| GETTING HIGHER STATUS | 9 | 15 |
| BETTER JOB | 21 | 35 |
| FREE  GOVERNMENT  AID | 15 | 25 |
| TOTAL | 60 | 100 |

**Table.no.2 Motivating factor for pursuing Education**

## TABLE NO.3

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **REASON FOR ABSENTEEISM** | **FREQUENCY** | **(%)** |
| LACK OF  INTERST IN  STUDIES | 7 | 11 |
| HEALTH PROBLEMS | 13 | 22 |
| PARENTS ATTITUDE | 10 | 17 |
| POVERTY | 10` | 17 |
| LACK OF  TRANSPORT  FACILITIES | 20 | 33 |
| TOTAL | 60 | 100 |

**Table no.3 Absenteeism**

* Majority of the respondents (33%) states that

the lack of transport facilities is the major reason for their absenteeism to school.  The tribal regions have the salient features of tracts of sloppy land , hills and forest. The soil is impoverished and rainfall is erratic. Their ecosystem is not convenient for travel. Most of the respondents (22%) feel that poor health is a major reason for their absenteeism.

* Lack of resources, combination of poverty, imbalanced diet, climatic conditions, lack of medical facilities, myths. These are some of the reasons for frequent illness among tribal children.
* 77% of the respondents having awareness about the educational scholarship provided by the Government
* 15% of the respondents only know that Government is allocating fund to improve infrastructure facilities.
* 100% of the respondents having awareness about Noon meal Programme , Free Concession, Free Uniform , Free Books which is provided by the Government.
* Only 8% of the respondents having knowledge about residential (Ashram) Schools.
* 13% of the respondents only know about the free medical checkup facility available during the course of education.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **DIFFERENT**  **AID FROM**  **GOVERNMEN**  **T** | **YES** | | **NO** |  |
| **FREQUEN CY** | **%** | **FREQUE**  **NCY** | **%** |
| EDUCATIONA  L  SCHOLARSHIP | 46 | 77 | 14 | 23 |
| INFRA  STRUCTURE  FACILITIES | 9 | 15 | 51 | 85 |
| NOON MEAL PROGRAM | 60 | 100 | - | - |
| FREE  CONCESSION | 60 | 100 | - | - |
| FREE  UNIFORM | 60 | 100 | - | - |
| FREE BOOKS | 60 | 100 | - | - |
| RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES | 5 | 8 | 55 | 92 |
| FREE  MEDICAL  CHECK-UP | 8 | 13 | 52 | 87 |

## TABLE NO.4

**Table no.4 Awareness about Government Aid**

## Suggestion

* Vocational institutions should be implemented for tribal students for creation of new avenues. Singh and Ohri (1993) opinioned 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 roll of mass media also needs to be assessed in the educational development of tribal.
* 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 premetric 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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