



“School Drop Out: Challenges in Rural Areas with special reference to Scheduled Tribes”

Abstract

For achieving Universal Primary Education (UPE), policies to improve school progression are essential. The major concern is increasing dropout rate. It is vital to address this issue. No doubt the number of children enrolling for primary education has increased over the year but the dropout rate is significant. Strategies designed to improve primary level retention and progression has not gained proper attention. In the state of Maharashtra near about 1% of the total population is tribal population. The areas inhabited by the tribal population constitute a significant part of the underdeveloped areas of the country. Scheduled Tribe population represents one of the economically impoverished and marginalized groups in India. The dream of inclusive growth will become true only when the education reaches to this community as well. It has been observed that the benefit of the policy is not able to reach and achieve its desired goal in curbing the dropout rate among the scheduled Tribe. Government is making various efforts through policy measures in making education to reach to this class. This research paper tries to find out whether the government policy measures are successful in achieving the desired target or not and what challenges does the government faces in making school inclusive of scheduled tribes.

Key Words: Scheduled Tribes, education, obstacles, socio-cultural differences.

1.1 Introduction:

Education is the key that opens the door of life. It plays a pivotal role in social change. It also brings some positive changes in human life, an upward mobility in social status, radical transformation in outlook and perception.

The term literacy means people should able to read and write. They should be able to understand the basic transaction. It may refer to a cultural fact pertaining to the development of a society's capability to make use of writing for various specific purposes. The rate of literacy is the indicator of the pace at which a particular society is getting transformed in a better position. Literacy is essential for eradicating poverty, cultivating peaceful and friendly international relation permitting the free play of democratic processes (Chandana and Sidhu, 1980). For the development of the nation as a whole education is must for each and every community. The researcher has made an attempt to study the literacy status of scheduled tribes and the various challenges faced by them at the ground level to make the education easily accessible to them.

1.2 Statement of the Problem:

According to the 2001 Census, the literacy rate of the Scheduled Tribes of India is only 47.10%. on the other side the National literacy rate is 65.8%. As everyone knows that Scheduled Tribes are one of the most deprived and marginalized groups with respect to education. To bring them in the flow of education state and central government has announced a host of programmes. In Maharashtra the 76.90 % of the total population is literate and the Rate of Literacy among the Schedule Tribe is 55.20 %. (Census 2001).

Education of ST children is important because it is a crucial input in the nation's strategy of total development of tribal communities. Hence this study occupies more importance.

1.3 Objectives of the Study:

1. To examine the educational facilities available to the tribal students in primary, secondary and higher education.
2. To study the various factors which motivate children to go for education?
3. To study the constraints in making the education all inclusive for tribal communities.

1.4 Data Collection:

For the purpose present research, the researcher has considered both primary and secondary data. The primary data is collected from the area of Shahapur, Thane district of Maharashtra. Government published reports, Journals etc are referred for secondary data.

1.5 Working Definitions:

Scheduled Tribes:

Article 366 (25) of the Constitution of India refers to Scheduled Tribes as those communities, who are scheduled in accordance with Article 342 of the Constitution.

Literacy Rate (LR):

Literacy rate (LR) is defined as the percentage of literates among the population between the age seven years and above.

Dropout Rate :

Dropout Rate is the proportion of students who leave school during the year. In simple word it is the rate of students joining the school/college and leaving it in between.

Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER):

Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) for any stage (Different Classes) is defined as percentage of the enrolment in that stage to the estimated child population in the respective age group.

1.6 Discussion based on Secondary and Primary data collected:

The Indian Constitution has given special consideration to several caste and tribes and one of such tribe is Scheduled Tribes (STs). The STs constitute around 8 per cent of the total population of the country. These communities have their own languages and culture different from the language spoken in the state where they are located.

For achievement of the dream of inclusive growth, this dream is not possible unless and until the benefit of the government policies reaches' to bottom of society and to the people it is meant for. India can't become the global player, unless there is growth and development of villages and its population. There are many people in the villages of the backward region in general and schedule tribes in particular that have been even deprived from primary education. Government has initiated many schemes for making education for all such as 'Sarv Shiksha Abhiyan'.

1.6.1 Dropout Rate:

There is a high dropout and low participation rates which are gender specific. Thakur points out that the impact of tribal education policy is neither satisfactory not disappointing (Thakur, 1995).

According NCERT report as early as 1978, 93% of the population in India was served by a 'tuition free primary school' within one kilometer radius.

It has been observed that the dropout rate is much higher in the tribal community. The main reason is the social cultural background of the community. There is lack of awareness among the community about the various government support schemes. There is still lack of motivation among the parents and students to pursue higher education.

Table 1 :**Trends in Proportion of Scheduled Tribe Population**

Census Year	Total population (in millions)	Scheduled Tribes Population (in millions)	Proportion of STs population
1961	439.2	30.1	6.9
2011	1210.8	104.3	8.6

More than half of the Scheduled Tribe population is concentrated in Central part of India, i.e., Madhya Pradesh (14.69%), Chhattisgarh (7.5%), Jharkhand (8.29%), Andhra Pradesh (5.7%), **Maharashtra (10.08%)**, Orissa (9.2%), Gujarat (8.55%) and Rajasthan (8.86%). The other distinct area is the North East (Assam, Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur, Meghalaya, Tripura, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh).

Table 2**Distribution of tribal villages by different concentration of groups - 2001 & 2011**

State	100% Tribals		>90% Tribals		> 75% Tribals		> 50% Tribals		> 25% Tribals	
	2001	2011	2001	2011	2001	2011	2001	2011	2001	2011
Maharashtra	1		1		1					
	1214	930	3614	3760	4785	4836	6640	6738	9944	10257

Table 3

Comparative Literacy Rate of STs and Total Population (%)							
Category / Census Year	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011	
Total Population	28.3	34.45	43.57	52.21	64.84	72.99	
Scheduled Tribes	8.53	11.30	16.35	29.60	47.10	58.96	
Gap	19.77	18.15	19.88	22.61	18.28	14.03	
Source : www.tribal.nic.in							

Literacy Rate increased by 11.86 percentage points from 2001 to 2011 for STs and 8.15 percentage points for total population during the same period. LR has however, all along been lower both for males and females STs as compared to SCs and Total Population (**source: Ministry of Tribal**)

1.6.2 Table 4**Fact:**

Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER)	ST	All Categories
Classes I - V (6 - 10 Years)	137	116
Classes I - VIII (6 - 13 Years)	119.7	104.3
Classes IX - X (14 - 15 Years)	53.3	65
Classes XI - XII (16 - 17 Years)	28.8	39.3

The GER for ST children at the elementary level (class I-VIII) is 119.7 compares favourably as it is 104.30 at All India level. But it falls drastically at the secondary level (53.3) with a gap of almost 12 as compared to the All India level. The GER at the post-matric level is 28.8, 10.5 points lower than the All India level.

From the above data it is evident that, the reasons for high dropout of ST children after class VIII and then again after class X is major issue of concern which needs to be addressed immediately.

The position of GER at the elementary level also varies considerably from State to State. It also differs across tribal groups and tribal areas within states. Hence there is an urgent need to pay attention on this issue. This shows the importance of the research topic which has been undertaken with one of the main aim to find out the reasons for drop out among the STs Students.

1.6.3 Enrolment Ratio at Primary Level:

It is always assumed that children above the age of 6 must be enrolled in schools for education. In our country the children of higher caste particularly of Brahmins having 100 per cent enrolment, but in case of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes the enrolment is still at a very low level as compared to higher castes in India.

It is found that the enrolment ratio of children in the age group 6 -10 for primary education (1st - 4th std.) as per the fieldwork in 2015-16 was 63.67 per cent only in the western part of Maharashtra. The area which undertaken for study comprises Thane. It means that more than 36 per cent children on an average were not enrolled. It is very surprising and delightful to notice that out of 14 sample village only one village i.e. Nyahale in Jawhar tahsil of Thane district was having enrolment 94.11%. It shows that the enrolment ratio at primary level varied between 40 and 95 per cent in the study area.

There is no disagreement of the fact that, without sending children to school, tribal cannot make progress. The socio-spatial situations necessitate them not to send their children to school. The factors of low enrolment ratio and their dropout rate 1st to 4th std. are due to non-availability of schooling facility, poor economic condition and remote of the area. All these factors are responsible for their low enrolment.

1.6.4 The Major Challenges faced in making school education inclusive:

1. Physical Location of Tribal Village:

Maximum number of villages in shahapur taluka is scattered. The population of the village is also low. Due to less population it becomes difficult to open school in each and every village or pada. There are also physical barriers like river, valley, nallas and forests. These physical barriers act as a hindrance.

2. Economic Condition:

The major source of income for the tribal depends on forests and agricultural activities. As the numbers of family members are large majority of the children in the age group of 5 to 10 helps their parents in these activities and hence education gets neglected as earning money for carrying out livelihood is important for them. Even parents are not willing to lose income by sending their children to school.

3. Teachers Problem:

It is found that in the majority of the cases that the relationship between teachers, parents and students are not so healthy. Teachers have their own problem when they get appointed in tribal region. Special incentives needs to be given to teachers appointed in the tribal areas.

4. **Girls Education:**

The enrolment ratio of girl child is the matter of great concern. Though for work both women and men work shoulder to shoulder this is not seen when the question of sending to school arises.

5. **Teaching Learning Materials:**

Though National Education Policy has insisted on teaching the children in their mother tongues at the primary level, this has not been implemented at the primary education for tribal. Teachers goes by bookish language. As a result teaching seems to be artificial for the tribal children.

Conclusion:

Education forms an important component in the overall development of individuals, enabling them to greater awareness, better comprehension of their social, political and cultural environment and also facilitating in the improvement of their socio-economic conditions. These hold true in the case of the Scheduled Tribes in India. Education becomes the catalyst of the growth and social change.

Though India's education system over the past few decades has made significant progress, the literacy of the Scheduled Tribes and other marginalized groups has been a matter of concern. This is despite the fact that the largest proportion of centrally sponsored programmes for tribal development is related to the single sector of education. Currently, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is implemented as India's main programme for universalizing elementary education. However, despite nation's efforts to ensure constitutional equality, dignity and development that they themselves wish for, the tribal people consistently have been lagged behind in education. There are many external as well as internal constraints such as socio-economic and cultural background of the tribal and psychological problems of first generation learners etc. which are responsible for this. There is need to prepare area-specific, tribal specific strategy to overcome this problem, but merely making the strategy is not going to solve this problem but its strict implementation in the tribal areas should be positively assured.

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