

## TRIBAL EDUCATION IN INDIA

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**Abstract:** India is a pluralist country, with rich diversity, reflected in the multitude of cultures, religions, languages and racial stocks. The Indian population includes different castes, communities and social groups. The prevalence of such pluralism has made the social fabric stratified and hierarchical consequently, social and economic opportunities are differentially distributed on the lines of caste and class affiliations. The emergence of the concept of community schools in the context of tribal areas was a result of the culmination of several processes at the community and administrative levels. Extensive developmental work, namely building, infrastructure, promotion of alternative economic activities, introduction of market mechanisms etc., among the tribal community participation. This, in the long run, proved catalytic in creating awareness about the prevailing educational deprivation in the community and generated a demand for access. Establishment of community schools was also possible due to the community ability to take responsibilities and in capacity to discharge them effectively. In this respect the community's recent-experience, of participation in planning and implementation of the externally funded development project, proved to be beneficial. Further, the socio cultural tradition of the tribal community where community participation is embedded, has allowed in the accept the partnership and take responsibility for managing the school.

**Keywords: Education, Tribes, Tribal,**

### Introduction

India is a pluralist country, with rich diversity, reflected in the multitude of cultures, religions, languages and racial stocks. The Indian population includes different castes, communities and social groups. The prevalence of such pluralism has made the social fabric stratified and hierarchical consequently, social and economic opportunities are differentially distributed on the lines of caste and class affiliations. At the geographical level also, India has equally pervasive and diverse features. It has large

tracts of hinterland, hilly, terrain, a dense forest cover and fertile plains. Such divergence in ecology and geography has ensured an occupation is agriculture, which is of Indians. Apart from a minuscule minority the rest live in the rural areas of India; Almost 80 percent of Indian's population live in rural areas.

Rural India is characterized by back of infrastructural facilities, poverty and indebtedness, which has led to the perpetuation of layers of inequalities and disparities at various levels. As a result, not only have certain deprived groups and sections of the population been unable to partake in the process of development, but also affected has been the every place of the country's process of socio-economic development. This is particularly several in the case of scheduled tribes as they not only live in hinterlands, bereft of basic amenities of modern life, but are also socially and economically marginalized. Their social deprivation is aptly reflected in their education and backwardness.

People should develop along the lines of their genius and should avoid imposing anything on them. We should try to encourage in every way their own traditional arts and culture...we should try to train and build up a team of their own people to do the work of education, administration and development. Some technical personnel from outside will no doubt be needed, especially in the beginning. But we should avoid introduction too many outsiders into tribal territory, but by the quality of human character that is evolved.

### **Meaning of Tribes**

The tribes in our country are known as 'Adivasi' in ordinary usage of the term. In general it is applied to people who are considered primitive and who live in backward areas and do not know the use of writing. The anthropologists in the past considered tribes as synonymous with the term race.

The constitution of India, in Article 366, defined the scheduled tribes as such of those tribes or tribal communities which have been so declared by the constitutional order Article 342 for the purpose of the constitution. There are 574 tribal groups who have been identified as scheduled Tribes'. They identified as scheduled Tribes'. They have

been previously described as aborigines; aboriginals ; primitives, adivasis; vanajatis; etc. Special provisions have been made in Articles 46, 275, 330, 332, 335, 338, 340, etc to safeguard the interests of scheduled Tribes and to protect them from social injustice and exploitation.

The term 'tribe' has been derived from Latin root. The middle English term 'tribes' meaning the three divisions into which the early Romans were grouped, came to evolve in the modern English Tribe. With the Romans the tribes was political division while the Greeks seem to have equated it some what with their 'fraternities' at times with geographical divisions at others. Today with the anthropologists and sociologists of western region the term means, according to the oxford Dictionary a race of people, now applied especially to a primary aggregate of people in a primitive or barbarous condition, under headman chief.

### **The National Indian Education Study 2009**

It is very important that we hold education important to our children, to our tribal membership, and today is going to be a day where we are going to voice our issues and our concerns to be representatives from the department of education.

### **Definition of Tribe**

In India we cannot have a ready made definition with which one can go in to the field and locate a tribe, the greatest emphasis has to be placed on an historical perspective for long solution to the problem of education of a tribe has been eluding the administration.

**According T.B.Naik** tribes are those, who have a control over natural resources, residents of forests and they are a part of the total stratification system of the country. According to Fried, 'tribe' denotes a stage in the evolution of social and political structure.

**Kammaladevi Chattopadhyaa:** defines “tribes as a social group usually with a definite area, dialect, cultural homogeneity, and unifying social organization. It can include several sub-groups”

**The imperial Gazetteer:** had defined “a tribes a collection of families bearing a common name, speaking a common dialect, occupying or professing to occupy a common territory and which is not usually endogamous, though originally it might have been.

**Dictionary of Anthropology (E.B.Tylor):** defines “a tribe as a social group usually with a social areas, dialect, cultural homogeneity and unifying social organization. It may include some subgroups such as sibs or villages. The tribe ordinarily has a leader and may have a common ancestor, as well as patron deity the families are small communities making up the tribe are linked through economic, social, religious family or blood ties.

#### **Jawaharlal Nehru, (1958)**

The aboriginal tribes of India are the oldest inhabitants of the country. For millennia, tribal societies have been subjugated by more recently arrived groups; their land was taken away, they were pushed further into the hilly gorges and wilds, and they were forced to work for their oppressors often without payment. Today tribal groups, which number more than 40 million, require special attention from the government even though they live largely isolated from the national culture.

In the past, many tribal groups were forced to assimilate into the dominant culture of the country. But some groups, such as the Bhils, Gonds, Santals, Oraons, Mundas, Khonds, Mizos, Nagas, and Khasis resisted change and assimilation to maintain their cultural identifies and languages. According to many Indians, their continued isolation poses problems to national integration. Under the banner of national unity, the government is now bringing these minority groups into the national mainstream. The main question is whether tribal societies can enter the national mainstream while preserving their distinct social, cultural and political beliefs.

## Characteristics of Tribal Community

Tribal community has unique characteristics such as

- common locality
- common name, territory and language
- strong kinship with endogamy and distinct taboos,
- specific customs, moral codes
- religious beliefs and rituals,
- uneducated and absence of schooling
- primitive traits
- a distinctive culture
- shyness of contact with the public at large.
- Geographical isolation
- social, economical backwardness.
- unity of social organization
- common ownership of the means of production
- they are self contained unit
- unique occupational pattern
- unique oral folk forms and folk dance
- Folk art and craft work
- Herbals and self medicines
- Low level of technological and scientific development.

## Tribal Education System

The tribal education situation has therefore to be analyzed in terms of the social conditioning of the people in past. Non-Tribals and Tribals were treated in different visions. Non-Tribals created some myths about tribal people. They never considered tribals as human beings.

Government planners see education as indispensable for helping tribal peoples cope with national integration. Education will also determine their prosperity, success and security in life. The tribes which remain either deprived of or negligent toward education will suffer the consequence.

Compared with the literacy rates of 29.34% for the general population, literacy among tribal peoples in India is at most 6%. The union and the state governments have spent considerable sums of money for tribal youths' education, but the results are meager. The Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes asserts that unless exploitation among the tribels is combated and eliminated through

education, no improvement in tribal welfare will occur. Within tribal areas education can be the basis for integrated development.

Government reports indicate that there is no scarcity of schools, other facilities or scholarships for the implementation of tribal education schemes. Most tribal youth find these incentives unattractive, however. Consequently, the government's dream to assimilate the tribes remains unfulfilled and raises basic questions about the implementation of such policies and strategies.

### **Planning for Education**

Planning for education is very often norm based. These norms especially pertaining to distance and population size, do not and cannot reflect the local specifics of requirements of tribal areas. This implies that planning for tribal groups needs to be seen as a special case, rather than applying the norms applicable for the general population. The national and provincial government in India have recognized these special features of tribal groups and they have adopted, at times, approaches and norms which are flexible.

The commitment of tribes to acquiring a formal education for their children varies considerably. Tribes differ in the extent to which they view education positively. Gonds and Pardhans, two groups in the central hill region, are a case in point. The Gonds are cultivators, and they frequently are reluctant to send their children to school, needing them, they say, to work in the fields. The Pardhas were traditionally bards and ritual specialists, and they have taken to education with enthusiasm. The effectiveness of educational policy likewise varies by region. In those parts of the northeast where tribes have generally been spared the wholesale onslaught of outsiders, schooling has helped tribal people to secure political and economic benefits. The education system there has provided a corps of highly trained tribal members in the professions and high-ranking administrative posts.

Many tribal schools are plagued by high dropout rates. Children attend for the first three to four years of primary school and gain a smattering of knowledge, only to laps into illiteracy later. Few who enter continue up to the tenth grade; of those who do, few manage to finish high school. Therefore, very few are eligible to attend institutions of higher education, where the high rate of attrition continues.

### **The Relationship of Tribal Students and Teachers**

Among the various important factors of tribal education that influence integration into the national mainstream of life are the students and their teachers. Tribal students have different backgrounds from their non-tribal schoolmates and even the teachers, who are normally outsiders, do not understand the tribal students. To the teachers, tribal students appear untidy, reinforcing their biases against tribals. These biases are expressed in various forms of discrimination. Tribal youth have complained that teachers did not teach them in the schools because they believed that if they did, the tribal students would no longer be dependent on them. Tribal youths also feel that teachers endeavor to undermine the attitudes toward their own customs, mannerisms, language, or, toward their cultural heritage in general.

### **Educational Institutions**

The schools and their surroundings shape the minds of the children who frequent them. Most tribal schools do not blend well into the tribal environment. They are alien and often ugly structures in tribal villages. Shortly after schools are opened, they acquire the look of neglected and dilapidated buildings. Even after tribal youths' educations are completed and they find employment, negative attitudes fostered in the classroom remains a real social hurdle. They do not belong in their tribal culture, nor in the national culture.

### **The Medium of Instruction**

Some tribes still speak their language. While adult males are often bilingual, the women and children speak tribal dialects almost exclusively. Yet, a tribal child, on entering school, is suddenly expected to understand the state language. Children cannot understand the teacher, let alone answer questions. Many teachers assume that tribal students are slow; even if the teachers are sympathetic, overcoming this language barrier requires a great deal of effort. It would help considerably if tribal pupils were taught, during their first years in school, in their tribal language. They could then be gradually encouraged to learn the regional language.

### **Curriculum of Tribal Education**

The content and the method of tribal must be objectively evaluated. Tribal youth have unique historical and social backgrounds but need special attention and orientation

in their attempts to bridge two cultures. Many school and college curricula which tribal youths encounter are either irrelevant to them and/or offer only negative views of tribal societies. While national and state governments, in theory, offer many benefits, concessions and facilities to tribal students, few of them reach the intended recipients.

### **Education for Tribal Leaders**

Tribal leadership has been subverted by outside influences and agencies such as the police, the courts and political parties. In the case of political parties, tribal leaders are often manipulated for the block of votes they can deliver rather than encouraged to take the initiative of leading their people to find locally derived solutions to local problems. As a result, village autonomy was destroyed, law and order has deteriorated, and respect for authority was lost. Tribal leaders began to exploit their own people politically, socially and economically.

Tribal students, even while they are receiving their education, must be trained to be dedicated to the service of their own people. They must help to develop their people's inner resolve to resist exploitation and to safeguard their own rights.

### **Conclusion**

The emergence of the concept of community schools in the context of tribal areas was a result of the culmination of several processes at the community and administrative levels. Extensive developmental work, namely building, infrastructure, promotion of alternative economic activities, introduction of market mechanisms etc., among the tribal community participation. This, in the long run, proved catalytic in creating awareness about the prevailing educational deprivation in the community and generated a demand for access.

Establishment of community schools was also possible due to the community ability to take responsibilities and in capacity to discharge them effectively. In this respect the community's recent-experience, of participation in planning and implementation of the externally funded development project, proved to be beneficial. Further, the socio cultural tradition of the tribal community where community participation is embedded, has allowed in the accept the partnership and take responsibility for managing the school.



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