



ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT STATUS AMONG TRIBALS IN EASTERN GHATS OF ANDHRA PRADESH

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RESEARCH ARTICLE



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Abstract

The present paper deals with the causative factors among the tribal education in eastern Ghats of Andhra Pradesh. The tribal social structure, culture and language are quite different from the general population of India. According to the education department the enrollment ratio of ST girls and boys shows a progressive trend in the country which can be attributed to the efforts of the Government in this regard. However, there is a significant wastage and stagnation at elementary stage and it was noticed that the dropout rates in the field of education is alarming in the tribal areas. The socio-economic, cultural and psychological factors are identified as inhibiting the phase of Academic development in respect of wastage and stagnation among the scheduled tribe children.

Keywords: Academic, Savara, Konda Dora, Eastern Ghats.

Introduction

Education is the most important instrument for human resource development and has a great significance. One cannot imagine education without schools as it plays a major role in moulding the basic ideas, habits and attitudes of the children, with a view to producing well balanced individuals. Schools provide not only education to the children but also keep them away from the social evils. Education is the key that opens the door of life. It plays a pivotal role in social change and it brings perfections in human life, an upward mobility in social status, radical transformation in outlook and perception. Education is widely accepted as the essential tool for the attainment of the developmental goals and leads to political consciousness, awareness of rights and duties among the people of a nation and it is the most important instrument for human resource development and has a great significance in the context of developing countries.

Methodology

It is based mainly on both qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative work is based on case studies, observation, interviews and focus groups discussions. Because of the nature of the study genealogical method is adapted to present lineages up to depth of five or six generations to understand the process of change over generations and to elicit the effects of the programmes aimed at ameliorating the conditions of the tribes under study in respect of education. Data is also obtained by canvassing 615 schedules in the selected Gummalaxmipuram, Kurupam and Saluru Mandals in Vizianagaram district and Seethampeta Mandal in Srikakulam district. The secondary data collected through internet, Andhra university library and Government offices.

Results and Discussions

A quarter of billion tribal population lives in India. The Indian tribal population exceeds the total population of many countries in Europe and Africa. Such a significant population is in utter backward condition due to isolation, ignorance, illiteracy and primitive technology. Priority to independence nothing much was done for their welfare except the initiation of a few protective measures for the tribal communities like a scheduled district Act, the Government of India Act 1935, where in the tribal areas were excluded or partial excluded from the purview of the legislation and the in the tribal areas the administration was given the powers of legislation as well as quasi judiciary. In the field of tribal education Indian education Commission of 1882 suggested

that the tribal children be exempted of payment school fees. After independent the Constitutional makers made several provisions in Indian Constitution for protection, welfare and development to uplift the tribal communities on par with the rest of the population. A duty is caste on the Government for the welfare and development of the scheduled tribe in the Constitution.

In the study area it is observed that there is a little compulsion of parents on their children in the tribal area and the children have freedom to act unlike in the urban areas. The school atmosphere is intimidating structured system to the children who are accustomed carefree life and, in several cases, the psychological factor is identified as the factor responsible for dropout. Having realized the above factors, the Government have initiated several steps for the to combat dropout and propagation of education for the scheduled tribes. A number of primary residential schools or mini gurukulams were established at Mandal level and residential schools were opened at division level and residential junior colleges were started in district level. In case of tribal girls and children of PVTGs 100 percent seats are reserved for scheduled tribes' students of that category, while in scheduled tribe boys 70 seats are reserved in the residential schools.

The study reveal the special efforts of the Government have yielded positive results as MHRD statistics shows a marked improvement of the tribal children in educational development which resulted in the reduction of dropout rate to 31.9 percent for male children and 30.7 percent to female children which itself is a tremendous achievement of the Government in the field of education and the study reveals the Government schemes have resulted in the overcoming of some of the cultural inhibiting factor. The education scenario is such that among the three tribes under study, though the first ascending and 2nd ascending generation of kinsman are illiterates, gradual change is noticed in ego's generation and rapid improvement is identified in the 1st and 2nd descending generations resulting in the students acquiring intermediate, degree qualifications in several cases and even among the particularly vulnerable tribal groups i.e., Savara. In recent years in the area of study, there are professional graduates and post graduates even among the girls are noticed from among the Jatapu, Savara and Konda Dora tribes.

The data obtained from 615 families reveals that 51.16 percent of the tribals are illiterate and 43.98 percentage of literacy rate noticed in the field area. The table 2 indicates that the 12.69 percent of them are degree holders and 3.64 percent are now pursuing post graduate degrees. The genealogies and case studies of the following tribal elders reveals the present the position of academic development among the study area.

Table-1 Literacy Level

Academic status	Male	Female	Total
Illiterates	449(45.55)	541(55.15)	990(51.16)
Literates	457(53.70)	394(46.30)	851(43.98)
Not applicable	48(51.06)	46(48.94)	94(4.86)

Table – 2 Levels of Academic

Levels of Academic	Male	Female	Total
Primary	80(46.51)	92(53.49)	172(20.21)
Upper primary	73(51.4)	69(48.59)	142(16.69)
High School	135(65.53)	71(34.47)	206(24.21)
Intermediate	99(51.56)	93(48.44)	192(22.56)
Degree	54(50)	54(50)	108(12.69)
Higher Education	16(51.61)	15(48.39)	31(3.64)
Total	457(53.70)	394(46.30)	851(100)

The Problem of Tribal Education

1. Internal Constraints

The internal problems of tribal education refer to the quality of school provision, suitable teachers, relevance of content and curriculum, medium of instruction, pedagogy, and special supervision. A majority of schools in tribal areas are without basic infrastructure facilities. Normally, school buildings in tribal areas have thatched roofs, dilapidated walls, and non-plastered floors. Research evidence shows that a large number of tribal schools do not have teaching-learning materials, or even blackboards. In tribal areas the opening of a school is equated with the posting of a teacher and same is the case with 'ashram' schools.

2. Content and Curriculum

Though the demand for changing the content and curriculum to suit the tribal context has been an old one, no serious effort has been made in this direction in any state, except for some sporadic pilot projects. The uniform structure and transaction of curriculum has put tribal children at a disadvantage. In respect of pedagogy, it has been found that the rigid systems of formal

schooling, which emphasize discipline, routine norms, teacher centered instruction, etc. have made the children wary of school. This goes against the culture of free interaction and absence of force as embedded in tribal ethos and culture prevalent at home. This has led to sharp division between home and school leading to lack of interest among the children towards school, and research findings have shown this as a major factor behind non enrolment. Another area is the inherent fear of tribal children towards the teacher, and their inability to establish a communication link with the teacher and this is reflected in low attendance and high dropout rates.

3. Socio-economic and Cultural Constraints

In a broad sense, these socio-economic and cultural factors can be outlined as poverty and poor economic conditions, social customs, cultural ethos, lack of awareness and understanding of the value of formal education, conflicts and gap between the home and school, etc. Studies on educational deprivation of tribals have inevitably linked it to their poor economic condition and poverty. The main occupation of tribals is agriculture, practiced either through shifting cultivation or terrace cultivation where productivity remains very low. Consequently, children play an important role, contributing directly or indirectly to family income by participating in the family occupation and household works like cattle grazing and fuel and fodder collection, etc. Even though elementary education is deemed free and additional incentives are given to children, in practice, it is not free due to several reasons.

Conclusion

Education does not provide any visible and immediate benefit and tribals do not see beyond their present state, the participation of tribal children in education also becomes limited. Another aspect identified as causative factor for the school dropout rate are due to health problems. Since, free education, provision of uniforms, distribution of books, scholarships by the Government as resulted in the improvement of enrolment and reduction of wastage and stagnation. Inclusion of local culture, folklore, and history to the curriculum can help building confidence among the tribal children, and this approach may help in increasing their enrolment and retention at school since music and dance are the essential aspects of their cultural life. Therefore, storytelling, theatre, painting, music, and dance performances should be promoted at schools.

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