

EDUCATING THE TRIBALS: GOVERNMENT INTERVENTIONS

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ABSTRACT

Education improves the quality of life. It promotes better health, expands access to employment, increases market productivity and facilitates social justice. Education helps oppressed groups in resisting oppression and fighting for an identity of their own. Tribes in India, constituting 8.6% of India's population continue to face disadvantages at multiple levels due to various historical and geographical factors. Children from these communities often find their school education irrelevant to their lives both culturally and academically. During the years of planned development, various efforts towards educational development have been made to provide and expand educational opportunities to scheduled tribes at par with non-tribals. The present paper throws light on the various intervention strategies that have been adopted by the government of India for the educational development of the Tribals.

Keywords- Scheduled Tribes, Social justice, Intervention strategies

Introduction

Education improves the quality of life. It promotes better health, expands access to employment, increases market productivity and facilitates social and economic participation. It is an important form of human capital that improves productivity, health and nutrition of the people of a country and slows down population growth. Education is an important tool of “social mobility” and “social empowerment”. Education enables a person to develop a sense of identity, recognition and self-worth. Right from booking tickets at counters to applying loans, to establishing one's legal rights, education helps a person in all facets of life. Education helps oppressed groups in resisting oppression and fighting for an identity of their own. Education also enables considerable reduction of gender inequalities. Education is a springboard to empowerment of disadvantaged groups.

Because of their lifestyle, scheduled tribes are considered as the most disadvantaged section among the disadvantaged communities. During the year 1961 about 8 percent of the tribal population were literates and by the year 1991 it reached 24 percent. But when compared to the general population and even to scheduled castes, the literacy rate of tribes was very low. In 2011, the literacy

rate of the tribe was 59% percent as compared to the general population (73% percent).

Tribes in India, constituting 8.6% of India's total population, and classified into about 700 communities, including both ‘major tribes and their ‘subtribes, inhabit all parts of the country except the states of Punjab, Haryana, and Delhi and the Union Territories of Chandigarh and Pondicherry. Their number and demographic features vary from one part of the country to the another with the largest number of tribal communities (sixty two) being in the state of Orissa.

During the British period and after India became independent, We have two sets of contrasting developmental scenarios in tribal areas.

The pre-independence era was marked by the British Policy of keeping the tribes in isolation without any concrete plans and programmes for their development. However, some sporadic efforts were made by Thakkar Bapa, Servants of India Society and various other voluntary organizations. To uplift educational and economic conditions of the tribals and also to protect and safeguard their interests. Article 46 was included in the Indian constitution as part of the Directive Principles of State Policy. Article 41 emphasized educational development while Article 45 set the goal of universalisation of

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elementary education within a stipulated time.

During the years of planned development, various efforts towards educational development have been made to provide and expand opportunities to STs at par with non-tribals. Various commissions and committees set up from time to time have made a number of suggestions for the educational development of the tribals with a view to help determine the policy and programmes of tribal education. The New Education Policy (1986) came into operation as a major step to step up educational development. That was the reason that Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) had become one of the goals of development strategy. National Literacy Mission (1987) was started to increase the rate of literacy with the help of primary education and adult education. National Advisory Committee (1992) headed by Prof. Yashpal found that school learning had become a boring, unpleasant, bitter experience for the students due to the heavy syllabus, difficult text books and irrelevant teaching methods. Operation Black Board Scheme (OBB) 1993 was introduced with a view to increase the number of teachers, classrooms, teaching aids etc. Again District Primary Education Project (DPEP) was initiated in 1994 in select districts with a view to improve the internal consistency of educational institutions by minimizing incidence of wastage and stagnation of tribal children and encouraging girls' education to step up rate of enrollment.

There has been a considerable increase in the literacy rates of tribals from 1961 to 2001 i.e 8.53 to 47.10. The Literacy rates among females also raised significantly during this period. Among the tribal women living in urban areas there is nearly four fold increase in the literacy rates i.e. 13.45 in 1961 to 59.87 in 2001. Simultaneously the literacy rates among rural tribal women also increased from 2.90% to 32.44% during these four decades. The continuous efforts of the Government and Non government organizations towards educational development among Scheduled Tribes has led to improved literacy rate among tribal women.

As per Census 2011, the rate of literacy in India is 72.99% whereas that of it in scheduled tribes is 59%. State-wise, the rate of literacy in scheduled

tribes is highest in Mizoram (91.7%) and lowest in Andhra Pradesh (49.2%). Among union territories, the highest rate of literacy in scheduled tribes is in Lakshadweep (91.7%). The census 2011 data also indicate that some states with higher concentration of tribal population have been doing extremely well. They are Mizoram (91.5%), Nagaland (80.0%), Manipur (77.4%) and Meghalaya (74.5%). Whereas some states with more number of tribal habitations continue to perform very low. They are Jharkhand (57.1%), Madhya Pradesh (50.6%), Orissa (52.2%), Rajasthan (52.2%) and Andhra Pradesh (49.2%).

The overall literacy rate of the Scheduled Tribes in Odisha increased from 23.4% in 2001 to 41.2% in 2011. Despite this improvement it remained lower than the national average which stood at 47.1 per cent.

The government of India has introduced various gender specific schemes and programmes at different phases of time with the objective to encourage tribal literacy rate. To improve retention rate and to check drop out among underprivileged students. The government through various schemes has given special focus on Educational and other infrastructure development in schools in tribal and backward various schemes.

Government Schemes for the Promotion of Education of the Tribals

Ashram Schools : To promote expansion of educational facilities for scheduled tribe students including PVTG (Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups) Ashram schools have been opened up, under a Centrally Sponsored Scheme on a cost sharing basis between the Centre and the States. The scheme covers all the tribal sub plan areas of the country spread over 22 states and 2 union territories. These Ashram Schools are residential schools where tribal children live with their teachers, who take care of them and also make them learn vocational skills. The salient features of Ashram Schools are:

- ❖ The scheme provides funds for the construction of school buildings. This scheme not only emphasized on the construction of school buildings but also focused on the construction of student hostels and staff quarters for Scheduled Tribes Boys and Girls including

PVTGs from the primary to the senior secondary stage and also provided for the upgradation of the existing Ashram Schools.

- ❖ Under the scheme, besides school buildings, the construction of students' hostels and staff quarters are also undertaken. The State Government/UT Administration provides the land for the Ashram Schools, free of cost.
- ❖ Financial assistance on 50:50 Central- State sharing basis is also provided for other non-recurring items of expenditure like the purchase of furniture, equipment, sets of books for the school library, etc.
- ❖ Only the capital cost is provided under the scheme. The recurring expenses are to be met by the State Governments.
- ❖ The location of new schools and admission policy are decided by State / UT.
- ❖ The Ashram Schools are to be completed within a period of 2 years from the date of release of the central assistance. However, for the extension of existing Ashram Schools, the period of construction is 12 months.

Construction of Hostels for Scheduled Tribe Students: Most of the tribal children live in inaccessible and scattered habitations which may pose hindrance in their education. To promote literacy among such tribal students, hostel accommodation has been provided under a Centrally Sponsored Scheme on a cost sharing basis between the centre and the states. The scheme covers the ST population in the country and is not area specific. Salient features of the scheme are:

- The scheme provides for the construction of new hostels and extension of existing hostel buildings for the middle, secondary, college and university levels of education.
- The State Government / UT Administration provides the land for the building, free of cost.
- The scheme does not provide for recurring expenditure for running of the hostels.
- The recurring expenditure and maintenance of the hostels, their administration/regulation is done by the State Government/implementing agency concerned.

Pre-Matric Scholarship Scheme for Needy ST Students: To improve the participation of ST students in secondary stage of education and to reduce the incidence of drop out especially in transition from Elementary to Secondary education, pre-matric scholarship scheme has been launched by the Centre Government in partnership with the State Government and the UT's. The purpose of the scheme is to help the ST students to perform well in their studies and have a better chance of progressing to the Post-matric stage of education. Salient features of the scheme are :-

- Funding ratio is 75:25 between Centre and States for all States except North East and special category States of Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Jammu and Kashmir where it is 90:10.
- Scholarships are available for studies in India only.
- The State Government/UT Administration to which the applicant actually belongs awards the scholarship.
- The Scheme aims at improving participation of ST children in classes IX and X of the Pre Matric stage, so that they perform better and have a better chance of progressing to the Post Matric stage of education.

Post-Matric Scholarship Scheme : The objective of the scheme is to provide financial assistance to the Scheduled Tribe students studying at post-matriculation or post-secondary levels to enable them to complete their education. The scheme has been revised w.e.f. 1.7.2010 with some modifications. The scheme is open to all ST students whose parents' annual income is Rs.2.50 lakh or less, w.e.f. 1.4.2013. The Salient features of the scheme are:

- The students are provided different rates of scholarships depending on the course. The courses have been divided into four categories and the rates vary from Rs.230/- per month to Rs. 1200/- per month. Besides, the compulsory fees are also being reimbursed.
- There is provision for readers' allowance ii. for visually handicapped students and escort

and transport allowance for physically handicapped students.

- The scholarship covers the whole iii. duration of the course and is paid on an annual basis and is subject to the satisfactory performance of the student and good conduct.
- The Commercial Pilot License Course (CPL) is also included in the Scheme of Post Matric Scholarship for ST students and 10 Scholarships are to be given to the eligible ST students per year. The selection of the 10 ST meritorious students for CPL course is to be made through a written examination conducted by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA).

National Fellowship and Scholarship scheme for Higher Education of ST Students:

Financial assistance is a necessity for many college students, particularly those planning careers that require many years of education beyond graduate or postgraduate level. Scholarships are free money which allows the students to pursue careers in sciences, humanities and social sciences. Instead of thinking about how to repay, students can focus on their studies. Realizing the importance of scholarship in the lives of students belonging to scheduled tribes to pursue higher studies such as M.Phil, Ph.D has been started by the Central Government. The Salient features of the Scheme are:

- The rate of fellowship for Junior Research Fellow (JRF) and Senior Research Fellow (SRF) is at par with the UGC Fellowships as amended from time to time.
- Under the Scheme 750 fellowships will be provided to the ST students each year.
- The maximum duration of the fellowships is 5 years.
- Fellowships are provided to ST students to enable them to pursue higher studies such as M.Phil. and Ph. D.
- UGC implements the scheme on behalf of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs.
- There will be no restrictions as regard to the minimum marks in the Post- Graduation Examination or prior clearance of NET examination.

Scheme of Top class education for ST students:

The objective of the scheme is to encourage meritorious ST students for pursuing studies at degree and post degree level in any of the selected list of institutes, in which the scholarship scheme would be operative. The Scheme started from 2007-08. There are 158 approved institutes in both the Government and private sectors covering the field of management, medicine, engineering, law and commercial courses. The total number of fresh Scholarships each year have been 1000 since financial year 2015-16. There is no ceiling in Institution wise and stream wise number of slots for the Top Class Institution. The Salient features of the scheme are:

- The family income of the ST students from all the sources shall not exceed Rs.4.50 lakh per annum w.e.f. 1.04.2013.
- To support the ST students will be awarded scholarships covering full tuition fee and other non-refundable dues in respect of Government The Government-funded institutions have made provision to award. However, there will be a ceiling of Rs.2.00 lakh per annum per student for the private sector.
- The scholarship also provides for (a) living expenses @ Rs.2200/- per month per student subject to actual, (b) books and stationery @ Rs.3000/- per annum per student and (c) cost of a latest computer system along with its accessories limited to Rs.45000/- as one time assistance during the course.
- The Ministry of Tribal Affairs funded this scheme on 100% basis and the funds are be released directly to the institution concerned.

Scheme of Book Bank : The scheme is open to all ST students selected in professional courses, viz medical, engineering, agriculture in veterinary polytechnic, law, chartered accountancy, business management, bio-science subjects. Since books on these subjects are generally expensive and sometimes students find it difficult to continue their education for want of books related to their subjects. Thus, the scheme of book banks will prove beneficial in reducing the dropout rate of ST students from professional instituting. The salient features of this

scheme are:

- However, the books, for the purposes of the Book Banks scheme, are restricted to prescribed textbooks.
- One set of books is purchased for two students of all professional courses except in respect of post-graduate courses and chartered accountancy where one set is purchased for each student.
- The books making one set in each course is decided by an Expert Committee constituted by the State Government for each course.
- The life period of each set of books is fixed at 3 years.

Scheme of Vocational Training for Tribal Youths : Therefore it has emerged as an important agenda for the Government of India recognized as a driving force of economic growth and social development. The provision of skill development opportunities and vocational training to ST youths is on the high priority list of the Ministry of Youth affairs. With this purpose in focus, the Scheme of Vocational Training is being implemented through the state governments/UT Administrations, Institutions and Organizations set up by Government as autonomous bodies, educational and other institutions like local bodies and co-operative societies and NGOs etc. the main aim of this scheme is to upgrade the skills of the tribal youth in various traditional / modern vocations depending upon their educational qualification, present economic trends and the market potential, which would enable them to gain suitable employment or enable them to become self-employed. The main features of the scheme are:

- The scheme will be implemented for the benefit of the Scheduled Tribes as well as PVTGs and can be taken up anywhere in the country but priority will be given to remote tribal areas, areas inhabited by particularly vulnerable tribes and areas affected by extremist activities.
- Under the scheme, the training for trades including modern trades having employment potential in the region should be provided.
- This scheme is exclusively for the benefit of

scheduled tribes as well as PVTGs. The organization running VTC will admit the ST youth irrespective of the region / State to which they belong.

- It will be imperative on the part of the concerned organization (i.e. States/UTs/NGOs/ other organizations) to assess the employment potential in a particular area in advance depending on the educational qualification of the target population, type of industries available in that region/State, present economic trend and market potential, etc. before proposing the trades.
- The organizations will establish linkages with recognized institutions which can provide a Certificate/Diploma to the candidates for the trades in which they have been trained.
- The institutions/organizations (State/UT run institutions as well as NGOs) who are already running project with the assistance from this Ministry, and also the new applicant institutions/ organizations should get/have recognition/ affiliation/ accreditation under “Modular Employable Skills (MES)” from Regional Directorate of Apprenticeship Training of the State/UT Governments or recognition/affiliation under “Craftsmen Training Scheme (CTS)” from National Council of Vocational Training (NCVT) under Directorate General of Employment and Training (Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India), as applicable.
- The organization should establish linkages with placement services, and for the candidates interested in self employment after availing the training, the organization shall arrange easy microfinance/loans for them through financial institutions, National Scheduled Tribe Finance Development Corporation (NSTFDC), banks, etc. Preference will be given to those institutions which guarantee placement/ employment after completion of training.
- As far as possible, minimum 33% seats will be reserved for tribal girl candidates. i) 100% grant-in-aid will be provided to the States/UTs/ State owned institutions /VOs / NGOs / other private organizations, eligible for assistance as

- specified in Para 2 of the Scheme.
- The grant-in-aid will be released to the State/ UT Governments/State owned institutions in one installment in a year, and to the NGOs/ private institutions in two installments as per General Financial Rules.
- The funding under this scheme will be in following two ways:
 - (i) by setting up and running VTCs mainly in remote areas/rural areas deficient in facilities,
 - (ii) by supporting vocational training for ST as also PVTG candidates in already existing institutions in townships/districts, etc. like ITIs, Polytechnics, computer training centres, and other private recognized institutions subject to the maximum assistance of Rs.30,000/- per annum per ST trainee as per the following financial norms.

Conclusion

As education is the most effective instrument for ensuring equality of opportunities, therefore the government of India has been making relentless efforts in educating the tribal youths. For this purpose the government has provided special educational facilities and reservation of seats in educational institutions. These governmental interventions of educating tribals may make a big difference in the lives by:

- Improving their citizenry values
- Building a better future for them
- Development of their ability to take right decisions
- Building confidence in them
- Modifying their personality

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