

Research Articles**Status of Tribal Education in Madhya Pradesh**Kalpana Agrawal¹

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Received : 03-Mar-2021**Revised** : 18-Mar-2021**Accepted** : 27-Mar-2021**Abstract**

A nation's development depends upon its ability to create skilled human resource through the promotion of quality education among its citizens. India is a country where different languages, castes, religions and ideas together with indigenous values play an important role. Within the context of education of marginalized communities such as Tribals play a vital role in the progress of the country. The Indian constitution assigns special status to the scheduled Tribes (STs). Madhya Pradesh holds 1st rank among all the state/UTS in terms of ST population and 12th rank in respect of the proportion of ST population to total population. The educational trends among schedule tribes of Madhya Pradesh shows very gloomy picture of education system of the state. Marked improvements in access and to some extent in quality of primary education in Tribal areas have occurred and stem from Govt. and non-government initiatives. Along with the Central Government the State Govt. has chalked out various ways and means to improve the quality and quantity of educated people in the state.

Keywords-Tribal Education, programmes, policies, tools, resources

Education is not only process of learning, an effort to build personality, it is also an agent of social change contributing towards a national society. Nelson Mandela had once said that "Education is the most powerful weapon to change the world". A nation's development depends upon its ability to create skilled human resource through the

promotion of quality education among its citizens. India is a country where different languages, castes, religions and ideas together with indigenous values play an important role. Within the context of education of marginalized communities such as Tribals play a vital role in the progress of the country. A fine balance is necessary to yield results. Education as a means of advancement of capacity, well being and opportunity is uncontested and more so among the periphery. Marked improvements in access and to some extent in quality of primary education in Tribal areas have occurred and stem from Govt. and non-government initiatives. However, the number of out-of-school children continue to be several millions, mainly due to a lack of interest parental motivation, inability to understand the medium of instruction large seasonal migration etc. Low literacy rates in Tribal communities continue to indicate a need to review the problem with a fresh approach.

The Indian constitution assigns special status to the scheduled Tribes (STs). Traditionally referred to as adivasis, vanvasis, tribes or tribals scheduled Tribes constitutes about 8% of the Indian population. Away from the mainstream of progress they were relegated to the areas lacking in basic amenities for minimum standard of living. From the time of Britishers an effort, though half hearted and rather callous was made to bring them into the mainstream of society. However it was after independence in line with the direction given by the constitution, both state and central govt. adopted certain measures to identify the problems and measures to uplift their condition. There are 573 scheduled tribes living in different parts of the country, having their own languages, which are different from the one mostly spoken in the state where they live. There are more than 270 such languages in India. As per the census the tribal population in India is 74.6 million. The largest number of tribals is still in Madhya Pradesh even after its division into two mp and chhattisgarh in the year 2000. education of ST is considered important, not only because of the constitutional obligation but also a crucial one for total development of tribal communities and the country as a whole.

Madhya Pradesh holds 1st rank among all the state/UTs in terms of ST population 12th rank in respect of the proportion of ST population to total population. The state has been recognized many times changing its boundaries. One phenomenon has,

however, remain unchanged in the it always has had the largest population as compare to any other state in the country.the scheduled tribes population of the state is 12,233,474 as per censuses, which constitutes 20.3% of the total population (60,348,023) of the state. There were 646 recognized scheduled tribes and 3 of them have been identified as “Special Primitive tribal groups” in the state. The main tribal groups in Madhya Pradesh are Gond, Bhil, Korku, Bhadia, Kol, Mariya, Halba and Sahariya, the 6 major scheduled tribes of the state which constitutes 92.2% of the total ST population in the state includes Gond, Baige, Bhil, Korku, Kol and Sahariya. As per Madhya Pradesh reorganization act of 18th Sept.,2000 tribes like Gonds and Bhils have large population whereas tribes like Andh, Birhor have a negligibile population. As per the tribal research institute, Bhopal (1965) the tribal areas of Madhya Pradesh has been divided into four main zones as follows.

1. **Western Cultural Zone** : Distrcits of Ratlam, Jhabua, Dhar, Barwani, Khargone, Khandwa, Harda, Dewas and Indore fall under this Zone. The main tribes residing in this Zone are Bhil, Bhilala, Barela and Patelia.
2. **Central Cultural Zone** : This zone comprises of mandla, Dindori, Balaghat, Seoni, Chhindwara, Jabalpur, Katni, Narsimhapur, Sagar, Damoh, Umariya, Sehore and Bhopal. The main tribes residing in this zone are Gond, Pardhan, Korku, Baiga, bharia, Nagarachi and Ojha.
3. **North Eastern Cultural Zone** : Districts of Shahdol, Sidhi, Rewa, Satna, Panna, Chhatarpur, Guna and Tikamgarh fall under this zone. Kol, Biar, Panika, Sour and Pav are the main tribes residing in this zone.
4. **Noth Western Cultural zone** : This zone consists of Muraina, Shivpuri, Seopur, Datiya, Gwalior and Bhind district. The main tribe residing in this zone is Seharria. Three special primitive tribal groups – Bharia (Patalkot, Chhindwara), Baiga (Umariya, Shahdol, Dindori, Balaghat and Mandala) and Seharria (Shivpuri, Sheopur, Guna, Gwalior, Muraina) reside in Madhya Pradesh.

The educational trends among schedule tribes of Madhya Pradesh shows very gloomy picture of education system of the state. The data shows that the drop-out rate is very steep after primary level onwards. It is often presumed that the tribal communities are nomadic and move from one place to other within the state as well as other neighboring

states, live mainly in the quest for livelihood, so they face serious problems in educating their children. But the major problem faced by tribal students who wants to study lies with the poor access to education & lack of infrastructure, much needed to promote quality especially in tribal belts. According to Education Development Index (EDI), Madhya Pradesh holds 30th rank, i.e., sixth from the lower in terms of indicators of elementary education on four basic variables used in computing EDI namely Access, Infrastructure, Teachers and Outcomes for the academic year 2006-07. The all India position of Madhya Pradesh with respect to education is 26th rank at primary level & further moves down to 27th rank at upper primary level. Physical access to schooling, especially at the upper primary stage, is still an issue in remote tribal areas. The state is having merely 25,884 middle schools in 55,393 villages that mean there is only one middle school on 2.1 villages and the average distance between two villages is about 5.56 kms. Similarly the state is having only 9144 higher secondary schools i.e. every H.Sc school covers students from 6.05 villages approximately. The sole focus of SSA program is on the enrolment of students in the school specially students belonging to scheduled tribes & scheduled caste without ensuring quality education. This resulted in the downfall of educational outcomes. The dropout rate at the primary school level is 15.6% while that at the middle level is 14.7%. These dropout rates further increased to 17% in case of girls. 73.57% schools are not having girl's toilet facility which leads to high percentage of girl's dropout from school.

The tribal belts not only lie far behind in terms of facilities, infrastructure & access to schools in these regions but further grave problem lies in the curriculum & content taught to the students of scheduled tribes & scheduled caste. Issue of content and curriculum being alien, the school timings and calendar quite ill-suited to their life environment, and the language of instruction in most cases being not familiar to the tribal children, are the main reasons for their poor retention, completion and learning achievement. The school session & timings are common for all school. But the tribal have their own culture & livelihood pattern. Normally the tribal & dalit student students are unable to attend the school in day timings as they have to work to earn their bread or to take care of their young siblings while their parents are at works. Also the school calendar is not appropriate for tribal. Annual exams are normally planned during the month of April-May & therefore tribal generally

migrate to other villages to work as migrant laborers in agricultural farms. Thus most of tribal students are devoid of giving exam.

Another reason of dropout of tribal students is the medium of instruction in which they are taught. Most of them feel uncomfortable to understand & speak Hindi language. For example there is a vast difference in Hindi & Korku language & students of Korku tribe are unable to speak & write Hindi language, in which they are taught & have to give examination. So they feel hesitant to attain school & even if they appeared, they sit quietly in classroom.

In Madhya Pradesh teacher's handbooks called Bridge Language Inventory (BLIs) have been prepared in 3 tribal languages viz. Gondi (Shahdol and Betul district), Kuduk (Raigarh), and Bhili (Dhar). Identified teachers were given training in using BLIS in their classrooms. The teaching learning package called Dham Dhama Dham was translated into Gondi and supplementary reading material Kopal, was developed for tribal children. The class I textbook Bharati has been translated into tribal languages. Supplementary TLM for tribal children has been developed in Jhabua district using local cultural form i.e. folk tales, songs, proverbs, riddles, to make the learning process interesting. In all, 450 teachers of 311 schools have been trained to use the supplementary materials.

Researches have underlined the need to develop culturally sensitive programmes of schools education that can ensure the dignity of tribal group by providing them with economically viable options for life (Sinha & Mishra,1997). Some attempts have been made for linking curriculum with the local needs of the communities. Such curriculum would make tribal children more sensitive to local contexts and sustain them in their respective environments instead of forcing them to move out in search of another life.

Use of local teachers

The acceptance of teachers by the community as one of them is critical for increasing schooling participation in tribal areas. An understanding of and respect for tribal cultures and practices and some amount of familiarity with the local language are important for teachers to gain this acceptance:

The presence of tribal teachers, especially from the same community, has shown and improved school participation for ST children. Coming from the same community, it is believed that the teachers would understand and respect the culture and the ethos with much greater sensitivity. Studies suggest that teacher motivation contributes more to teaching – learning process than teacher competence

Realising the importance of having teachers from the local community, many state have appointed community teachers or para teachers as they are popularly referred to. The deployment of community teachers was first experimented in the late Seventies in NFE and later in the formal school with the Volunteer teacher Scheme of Himachal Pradesh (1984). Nineties saw spurt in the appointment of community teachers, who are from local community and appointed by the gram Panchayat or Village Education Committees. Different states have different schemes for appointing community teachers – Shiksha Karmi Scheme (Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan), Shiksha Mitra Yojna (Uttar Pradesh), Lok Shikshak (Bihar), Andariki Vidya Volunteer Scheme (Andhra Pradesh), Vidya Upasak Yojna (Himanchal Pradesh), Shishan Sevak (Maharashtra), Guruji (under EGS in Madhya Pradesh), Shikshak (under Basti Shala Scheme in Maharashtra) etc.

The agenda of Union Human Resource Development Department is on the way to make sweeping transformation in the education system of India. It allows private investment in India's education sector which indicates on the government aspiration to push back from its responsibility to guarantee the right to education of the children. This will further deteriorate the situation of the tribals as it will be inaccessible to them due to their financial hazards.

According to Dr. Anil Sadgopal, Senior Educationist in India 62% students have to leave their studies before reaching high school, which roused to 70% in case of dalit & 80% for tribal students. Among the students who were registered in class 1 only 6% tribal students continue their education up to 12th standard. Further the 10th board certificate is very important for dalit & tribal students to get into ITI or to get employed. To do away with X board will close these doors also for dalit & tribal students.

The development of education facilities in tribal belts is upgraded with the budget of tribal welfare department. But even this tribal department budget has not been enlarged to benefit tribal students.

Madhya Pradesh has high concentration of different tribal groups. But the education and school system continue to remain quite alien to the tribal culture, traditions and life styles leading to their low interest in education, early drop out and accounting for their low educational status of tribal child. Unless we respect and make necessary alterations in the content and curriculum in accordance with their culture, languages & social practices, it would be a difficult task to continuously retain the interest of tribal children in education & preventing their early dropouts.

A programme of schooling, which does not pay attention to the ecological, cultural and psychological characteristics of tribal children is highly unlikely to make any significant impact. The educational system of the dominant non-tribal population is of very limited value in the tribal cultural milieu because it does not match with the lifestyle of individuals and the need of the tribal community. Linking school education with life in general and the needs of the tribal communities in particular is a most important step that requires serious attention.

The evidences suggest that tribal children do possess the basic cognitive abilities and psychological dispositions necessary for successful participation in school. Yet tribal children have very low levels of participation and success in school education programmes. This points to our failure to develop a sensitive model of education that is rooted in the psychological strengths of tribal children. Their skills need to be utilized not only for education of tribal children in schools, but also in the broader economic spheres of tribal life. Such attempts will be helpful in generating and promoting the sense of competence, self-efficacy, self-respect and positive self-image among tribal children in general.

Ever increasing contact of tribals with the outside world over the years has introduced several changes in their culture and life. These changes are reflected in their psychological characteristics also, studies (i.e. Mishra et al 1996) indicate that their ways of

perceiving the world, categorizing objects, interpreting pictures and strategies of learning and memory become more similar to those with whom they interact and negotiate their life in these changed circumstances. This suggests that tribal children can acquire all those skills that the members of other groups of the society possess. What is important on our part is to develop a positive frame of mind about tribal children. This is possible only through sensitivity to tribal culture and life, recognition of the cognitive strength of the tribal children and appreciation of their personality qualities. Efforts in these directions will be very helpful in organizing the programme of tribal education as well as promoting economic and other aspects of tribal development.

. Education is that root which sustains the phenomenal growth and development that man has attained so far in all the walks of life. Various experiments have been carried out towards improving the quality and relevance of human life. It is through education that man has established his superiority over the universe. History bears witness to the contributions of the hoary educationists of our country. Marked improvements in access and to some extent in quality of primary education in Tribal areas have occurred and stem from Govt. and non-government initiatives "Today India needs true servants of the people in all fields, especially in Adivasi areas we should destroy the demons of ignorance, poverty, disease etc., and revive the glory of the past. Our glory should express itself in serving the world. We should feel that we are all Indians. Let us attempt to build a new world as servants of Sarvodayas" (Acharya Vinoba Bhave, 1953)⁶. The Government of Madhya Pradesh has taken up so many welfare oriented programmes for the upliftment of the backward classes of this region. There are various departments to cater to the needs of the Scheduled Tribes. Along with the Central Government the State Govt. has also left no stone unturned to take care of the holistic development of the tribes in the state. It has also chalked out various ways and means to improve the quality and quantity of educated people in the state. The future of the Tribals seems to be promising because of the various programmes and policies of Indian Govt. and the keen desire of the Tribes to link with the main current of the country.

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