

Tribes and Education: Understanding the Growing Problems and Challenges Faced by Tribal Population of Jharkhand

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Abstract- India is a country of rich heritage, diversity and, culture and it consists of people from different culture, language, religion, sects, race coexisting together and among them are aboriginals who are tribal people. Jharkhand is a land of physical and human resources. But the tribal people here remain in the periphery of progress and civilisation. There are many reasons behind it. Government and other non-governmental organizations are engaged in welfare programme and policies but those are not sufficient. National Education Policy 2020 also empathetically addresses the problems regarding tribal education and also proposes some significant inclusive ideas. But the problems must be uprooted from its origin. The fourth goal of sustainable development focuses on equality, equity and inclusion in quality education. But until and unless the tribal people who consist one third of the population will face the light of mainstream education, the country cannot progress nor the dream of an inclusive society will be actualised. However, qualitative in approach, this paper aims at finding out the issues that are hindering educational progress of the tribal population of Jharkhand and also the paper suggests some possible measures to be adopted to cope with the issues regarding their education. The data have been collected through secondary sources namely census report and research papers. In the era of globalization where we are talking about the development and upliftment of all, the tribal communities are still lagging behind. One cannot talk of development without including the Aboriginal community.

Key Words: Sustainable Development, Inclusive Society, Vulnerability, Quality Education, Curriculum

Introduction

Jharkhand is a land of resources— a treasure trove of minerals, forest and agricultural resources. Its capital itself is an educational hub and there are famous industrial cities also in this state. In this context Jharkhand is progressive from economic and educational sphere. But as there prevails darkness under the lighted lamp, so is the case of Jharkhand behind its progressive visage. Although the Scheduled Tribes who are more than one third of the population of this state ‘constitute massive workforces’, the severely poor literacy level among STs is ‘an

important bottleneck in the development of the state' (Kumari, 2016). Sengupta (1982) referred the indigenous people as "the fourth world" and in reality, also, the position of most of the people from this category is worse than the rest of the members of a third world country like India as most of the tribal people remain in the periphery of proper formal education and financial success. This is evident from the following lines:

The most modern establishments of education and employment avenues exist in the State where primitive groups are a reality even today. Though the Census of India 2011 has shown a decline of main workers and a decline of workers from higher educational levels. In the group of cultivators and agricultural labour still major employment migration of youth from the State are reported. There seems to be lack of synergy between education and employment among tribes due to which educated tribal youth have to come back to the primary sectors or take the route of various cities or States to be domestic help or manual labour; and thus, education more often fails to manifest its demonstration effects of its benefits. (Baraik, 2019)

In educational policies tribal education has always been a major concern. National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) also focuses on tribal values and culture in curriculum also. This is certainly a noble endeavour in the domain of inclusive education. In sustainable development goals we also highlight the issues of equity and equality in education. But it is a matter of concern how far the tribal people of Jharkhand, especially the particularly vulnerable tribal groups have received the light of formal education. And it is also a phenomenon for research how far the indigenous knowledge system of these tribal people has been included into our modern education system. NEP 2020 points out this problem by mentioning that 'Children from tribal communities often find their school education irrelevant and foreign to their lives, both culturally and academically' (p. 25).

In his study, Xaxa (2011) stated that tribal development efforts fail to reach them, and the fundamental reason for this is tribal people's geographical isolation. He also mentioned rates for various levels of education. This is exacerbated by the fact that there is a significant absence of literacy, and schooling necessitates a particular form of attention. In this scenario, the package of education provided to tribal youngsters is more important than good delivery. Indeed, everything linked with school - the medium of instruction, the culture and subject of education, and the teachers themselves - are alien to tribal youth, resulting in high dropout rates.

The Tata Institute of Social Sciences assessed tribal residential schools in 2019 and found that they were isolated from adjacent communities, resulting in student isolation and increased apathy on the part of school management and staff towards the kids' welfare. Many of the schools lacked basic infrastructure. Classrooms were transformed into student housing. Inadequate infrastructure resulted in shortages, neglect, and eventually abuse, often at the hands of school officials. The lack of electricity and/or lamps, as well as the distance between usable toilets and the residential areas, endangers youngsters, particularly girls.

Objectives

1. To scrutinize the issues and Problems faced by Tribal population of Jharkhand.
2. To present in an organic way the suggestions to cope with the present problems of tribal population regarding Education.

Research Questions

1. What are issues and Challenges faced by Tribal population of Jharkhand?
2. What can be done to overcome the problem and issues faced by the Jharkhand Tribal population?

Methodology

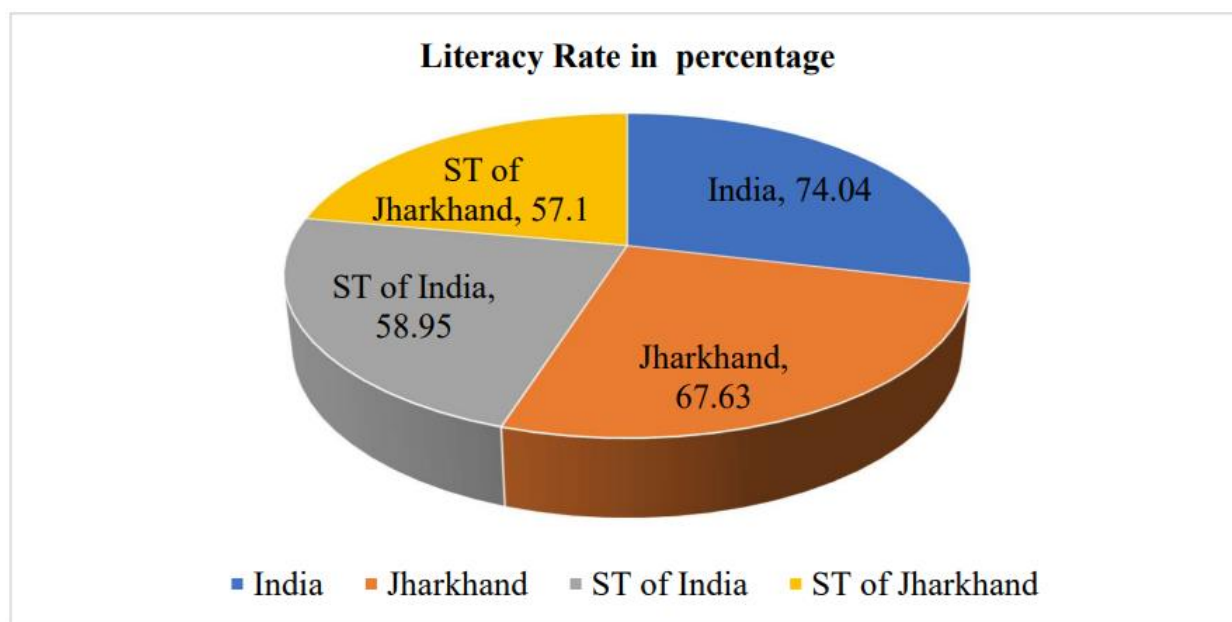
In this paper the Qualitative Approach is used to study the phenomenon. In this the central phenomenon is the key concept, ideas and process which are being investigated. This particular paper falls under Critical Theory paradigm. This basically tries to show inequalities pertaining in society. This paper tries to analyse and diagnose faulty and crumbled consciousness that has brought specific group to related powerlessness and tries to question the legality about this. This paper is not a field-based work so the data collected was mainly in the form of secondary and tertiary text document. The data collection method involved already existing data. In this paper data collected by others are reanalysed so the procedure of Secondary data analysis was followed along with content analysis method.

Analysis and Discussion

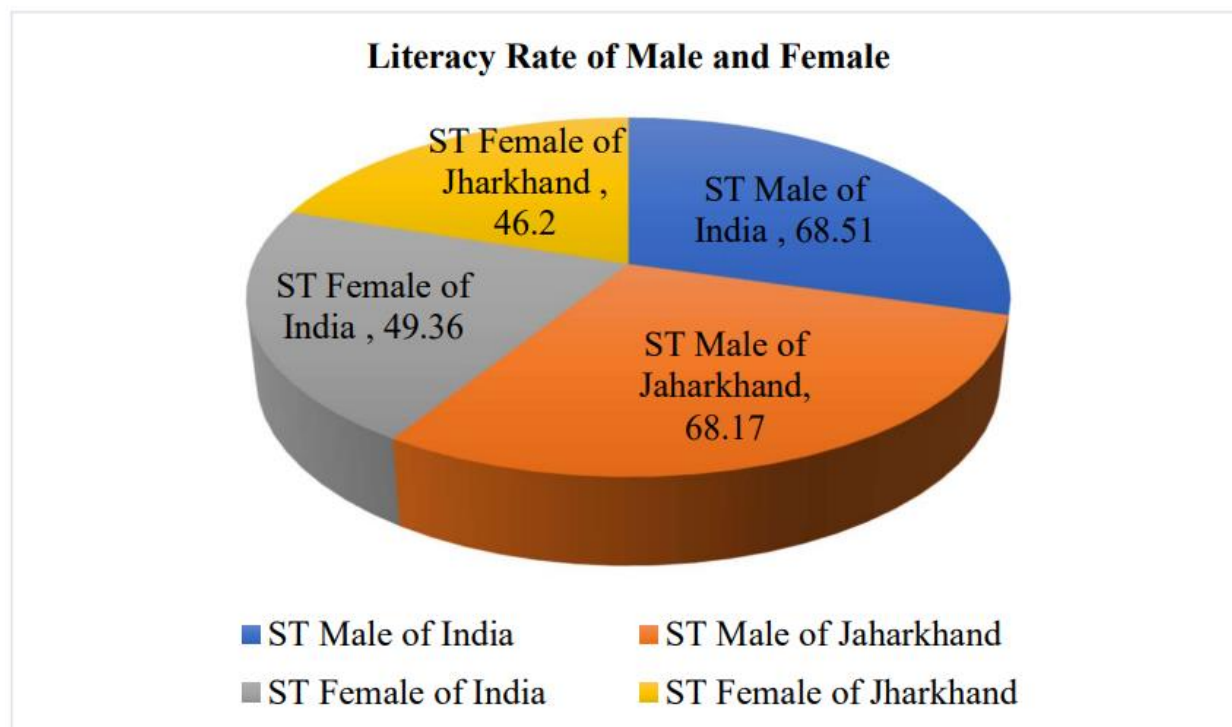
Issues in Tribal education

According to 1991 census, the literacy rate among schedule tribes was 27.52 percent in Jharkhand. With respect to female literacy, the rate was 15.41 percent. Within a decade that is in 2001 census this percentage increased to 40.7 percent while the total literacy rate of Jharkhand was 53.56 per cent. The low rate of tribal literacy in "the industrial districts like Dhanbad and Bokaro" demonstrates that this rate is not reliant on the local environment. (Baraik, 2019). There is disparity between the development and tribal education in the State (ibid). Although the literacy rate of STs improved to 57.1 percent in 2011, development has been gradual in compared to the percent in 2001, and this percentage is also lower than the literacy rate of non-ST-SCs (72.3 percent) in Jharkhand. Furthermore, there is a significant disparity in literacy rates among STs, with male literacy rates standing at 68.17% and female literacy rates at 46.2%. (ibid). NEP 2020 also mentions-

According to U-DISE 2016-17 data, about 19.6% of students belong to Scheduled Castes at the primary level, but this fraction falls to 17.3% at the higher secondary level. These enrolment drop-offs are more severe for Scheduled Tribes students (10.6% to 6.8%), and differently-abled children (1.1% to 0.25%), with even greater declines for female students within each of these categories. The decline in enrolment in higher education is even steeper. (p.25)



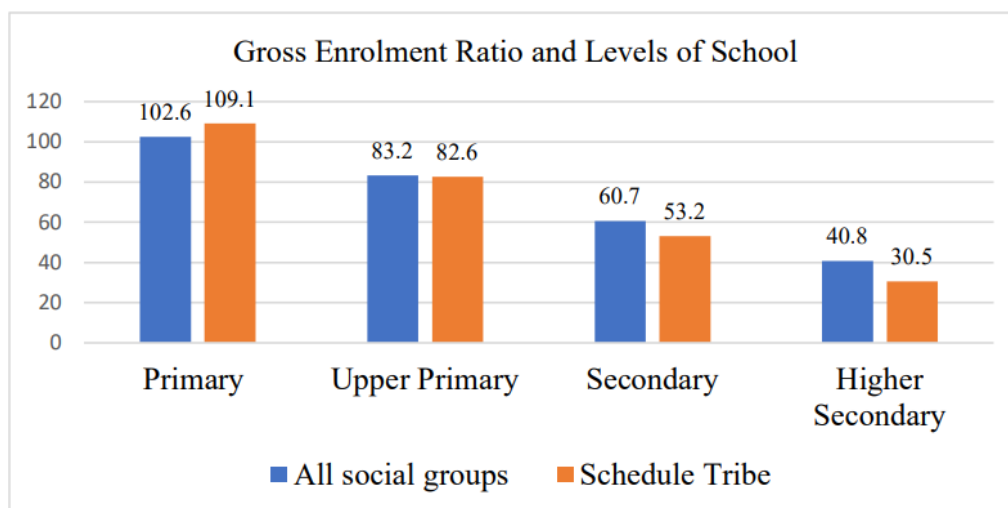
Source: 2011 Census



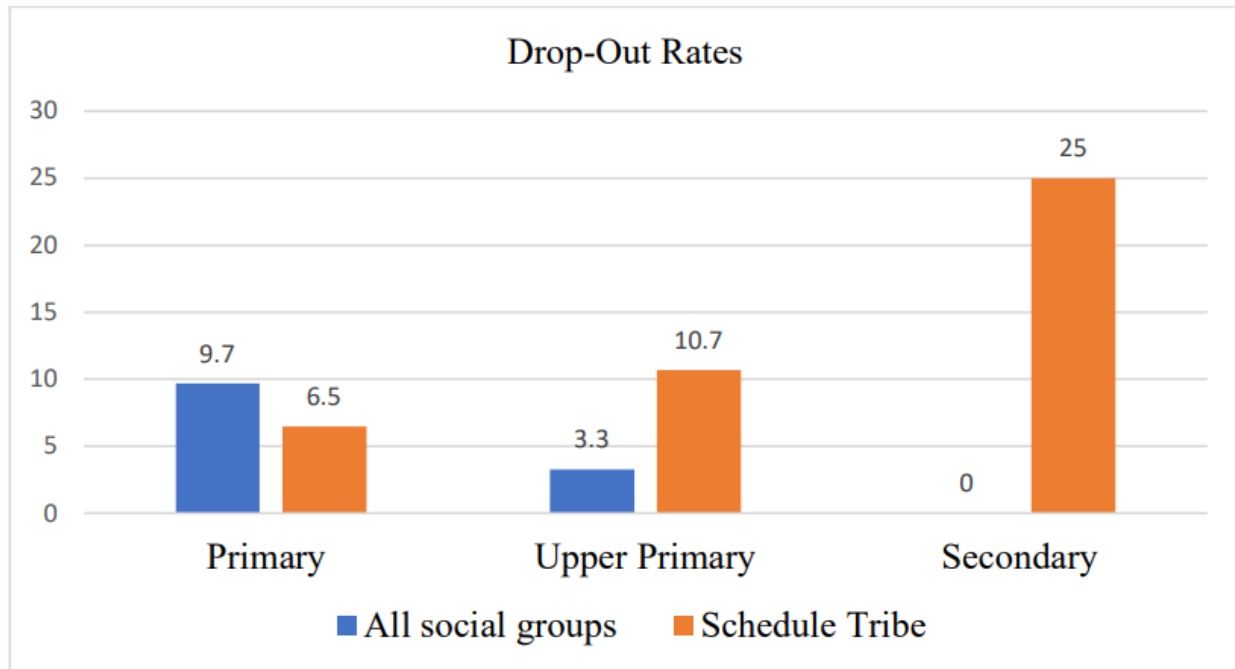
Source: 2011 Census

The tribes of this state are being deprived from three domains. They are facing problems regarding physical access. They have been secluded culturally and linguistically. Females are the worst sufferer and deprived in this matter. The remote access is created here due to its

geographical structure and dense forest. The problem gets worse in rainy season. The distance is not created due to its geographical structure only but due to its physical and cultural distance as well. The traces of cultural incompatibility are found since the emergence of education of the tribes in Jharkhand. In every case availability is not just the concern but sometimes problem is generated due to lack of motivation. Sometimes unwillingness is not the issue but hard work due to survival seems to be the main culprit in their voyage of education. The primary tribal livelihood is based on agriculture. So, the students are also compelled to invest their time in works related to harvesting. The female students are also often engaged in their household chores. Thus, the learners are always under the pressure of lot of works beside their study. As this is the means of their livelihood most of the poor families cannot understand the positive outcome of education as it needs a lot of time to be economically established through continuing study. And it can also not be guaranteed that if they become educated, they will secure an established career. Furthermore, ST children's access to schools and the quality of education they receive are limited by their parents' low educational levels. 2016 (Kumari). According to studies, "tribal children's experiences at school range from discrimination to a sense of full isolation," which is a problem with their education? (Kumar 2008). They frequently struggle to make connections between the material covered in their curriculum and aspects of their culture or society. Their inability to connect their knowledge is another obstacle to their learning. The linguistic barrier frequently causes problems for admitted students. The imposition of Hindi language in their education robs them of their right to have education in their own mother tongue. It is also a challenge to translate every book in each indigenous language. Another problem for drop-out rate as is mentioned by Kumar (2008) is that 'many teachers in schools in the ST areas are non-STs' who tend to view tribal language, culture and social practices as being inferior to theirs'. Such incidents leave a negative impact on the mental health of ST children. 'Regional, social and gender disparities in the State also need to be addressed for balanced and overall progress of the State in terms of region, all social groups and gender' ((Baraik, 2019).



Source: UDISE 2019-2020



Source: UDISE 2019-20

Measures needed to be adopted to reduce problems related to educational factors

As is mentioned above in the paper that Jharkhand is a land of resources, the state needs to utilise the geographical and cultural resources along with the human resource. As a hub of multiculturalism and multilingualism, the problems of tribal people need immediate government attention. Although the state govt. and central govt. also try their best to enhance the education system and the policies like Jharkhand Ashram School policy, Jharkhand Tribal Language and Culture Preservation Policy, Jharkhand Tribal Scholarship Policy, Jharkhand Tribal Sub-Plan policy and many such policies are also concerned with the problems of STs, it needs more in-depth intervention to uproot the major problems that hinder the smooth educational progress of these tribes especially the endangered tribes. Several NGOs collaborate in this project as well. But merely introducing grandiose programmes and incentives is not a cure-all for ST children's scholastic and literacy problems. (Kumari, 2016). At first the economic sustainability should be prioritised because as long as the tribal people will be poverty-ridden it would be difficult for them to invest their time in formal education, especially higher education. So, assurance of employment should be confirmed to bring them into mainstream education. The missionary schools, Eklavya Model Schools etc. are taking care of the tribal students but as still a major tribal population is outside the mainstream education, all the educational associations need to deal with this matter empathetically. Proper communication, transport system etc. are necessary to assure a barrier free education for them in the case of physical accessibility. If there can be adopted any measure to reduce the poverty level of these tribes, their children can proceed their education in a good pace. (Kindo and Austalin, 2020) noted in their study that the majority of tribal students had a poor or average level of career knowledge. Some findings are supported by

Reddy, Devi, and Reddy (2011), who found that students from the OBC group had higher mean vocational education interest scores than SC/ST students. According to Khobragade (1993), ST students have fewer suitable conditions at home than other categories of pupils, which has an impact on their school vocational performance and vocational profession.

The curriculum including the content as well as the assessment process demand a thorough reform to include the indigenous knowledge system of the tribes. If the tribal students can trace the curricular element associated with their own society or culture, they will internalise education properly rather than forcefully gobbling or swallowing the curricular content. Keeping in the mind about the poverty level of these tribes, if vocational education is given more stress, the poor families will also send their children enthusiastically. If the medium of classroom communication includes the languages of the tribal students admitted into that particular class, the tribal students will understand the curricular content and activities better. "Tribal children should be taught in their mother tongue at least in Classes I to III to ensure comprehension of the subjects delivered." (Kumar, 2008). Besides, if the text books can be available in the tribal languages the literacy rate may be increased. Apart from these things, Tribal Education Programs needs an overhaul starting from planning to feedback. Decentralization of educational management is essential. There should be culturally sensitive programs of school education that ensure dignity of tribal groups. There is a need to evolve a sensitive model of tribal education rooted in the psychological strengths of tribal children. For maximum effectiveness, teacher training has to be an ongoing process, and not a one-time effort. In addition to training, capacity building of teachers on academic competence and pedagogy is needed. (Kumari, 2016)

Conclusion

Whatever problems are faced by the tribes of Jharkhand and whatever measures have been adopted or are proposed to better the educational status of these tribal people, a bitter truth is that the approach used to provide educational opportunities for tribal communities does not fully address the unique limitations that indigenous people have. To cater to each of the problems discussed so far, the education department needs to formulate uniform policies for the entire state. However, the implementation of a dual system of administration appears to be one of the key obstacles to tribal education at the planning level, making it impossible. However, the state and the central government as well should focus specially on the particularly vulnerable tribal groups as they are in the verge of extinction. If these aboriginal cultures are to be preserved, a paradigm shift is required in curriculum reform. Before creating any programmes, policies, or curriculum reform, the departments of education and tribal welfare must first comprehend the complicated realities of tribal life and what tribe members expect from the system. Otherwise, the condition of the tribal people of Jharkhand will never be satisfactory, nor will the endangered tribal population be in the scenario for a long period. India may one day achieve the status of a first world country but if the condition of the tribal population of India remains same the country will hardly achieve the status of an inclusive society.

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