

# The Tribal Education in India, Status, Challenges and Issues

M.C. Upmanyu

Ph. D. Scholar, JJT University, Rajasthan.

---

**Abstract:** This article is a conceptual frame work and understanding related to tribal education in India scenario by the guide and researcher conducted study with both primary and secondary sources of data. The present structure of the society and its diversity within the cave of caste system in India projected through critical analysis. Integration of development theory and practices contextually in India and special need focusing towards the tribal education policy, prospects and need also. The first hand experience of different social reformers, educates and the researchers perceptions are also critically examined with statement forms in the article. Suggestions and need based education in the provision of Indian constitutions are drawn time to time in order to strengthen the need based education specific to Tribal Education system of India. Lastly the suggestions are also given for the uplift of the provision as tribal education of India. However, based on the analysis of the factors contributing to non-enrolment and/or dropout and descriptions of case studies, it is evident that there needs to be more philanthropic investment outside the classroom too. This would provide a solid foundation that leverages these assets and develops stronger individual potential that can transcend the barriers experienced by tribals today.

**Keywords:** Tribal Education; Education Policy; Constitutional Rights; UNESCO etc.

---

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Education from elementary level to technical higher education can able to bring the world to a single platform where competency and individual potentiality give the worth of living. The Vision 2020 of India and the competitive challenges in globalization race of the world meet the platform of development. Human rights abuse is 'normal' in most of our countries. Many people have been killed, maimed and tortured. Peaceful demonstrations are stopped with guns by the authorities. Evidence abounds in most countries for everybody to see. The judicial system in most of our countries lacks the needed independence and fairness. Judges who do not kowtow to the whims and fancies of the government in power are either sacked or murdered under mysterious circumstances. Most suspects do not get fair trials in court and many unfortunate citizens are imprisoned even without trial. Political opponents are often the said victims of this abuse of human rights. Most governments in our part of the world have monopolised state press and electronic media, and deciding on which news item is to be published/aired or not. Most often the parties of the other side of the political divide are prevented from benefiting from these facilities without censorship. They are never seen as alternative future governments but as political enemies. Due to the high cost of education, poverty and lack of materials and (school) structures, our cities are full of street children, who end their day sleeping on verandahs and Kiosks, not knowing where the next meal will come from.

On the 50th anniversary, 10th December 1998, we resolved to treasure and uphold the tenets of the Universal Human Rights Declaration for the benefit of all and resist human rights violations of any kind wherever they may rear their ugly heads, let us keep that pledge.

**"You can only kill the messengers.**

**You cannot kill the message. " Ken Saro – Wiwa**

Failure to end the global crisis in education makes sustainable development impossible by denying nearly a billion people the ability to make informed choices about their lives, their families and their societies. The Plan of Implementation for the World Summit on Sustainable Development recognises that education is critical to sustainable development, and reiterates existing international commitments to the Education for All goals and strategies agreed in Jorntien in 1990 and again in Dakar in 2000 - including universal primary education by 2015.

However, the world leaders gathered in Johannesburg must do more than repeat old promises. Two years after Dakar, aid to education still languishes at pitifully low levels and 125 million children are still out of school (UNESCO report 2002, Bangkok) . In order to ensure that all girls and boys can complete a full course of schooling, governments attending the summit must take decisive new steps to deliver on the promises they have already made. The Global Campaign for Education, a broad alliance of child rights activists, NGOs, and public sector and teachers' unions, with members in more than 150 countries, demands that in World Conference, Johannesburg(14-18 April 2002):

## **2. BACKDROP OF TRIBAL EDUCATION**

The Fifth Schedule of the constitution mainly states the provision to the administration and control of scheduled areas and scheduled tribes such as: Executive power of a State in Scheduled Areas; Role of Governor in the administration of Scheduled Areas; Constitution and function of Tribes Advisory Council; Law applicable to Scheduled Areas; and Amendment of the Schedule. The Sixth Schedule of the constitution, under Articles 244(2) and 275(1) of the constitution mainly states the "Provisions as to the Administration of Tribal Areas in the States of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram", inter alia, with reference to: Autonomous districts and autonomous regions; constitution of District Councils and Regional Councils; Powers of the District Councils and Regional Councils to make laws; Administration of justice in autonomous districts and autonomous regions; Powers of the District Council to establish primary schools, etc.; Powers to assess and collect land revenue and to impose taxes; suspension of acts and resolutions of District and Regional Councils; Dissolution of a District or a Regional Council.

## **3. EDUCATION OF SCHEDULED TRIBE CHILDREN**

Scheduled tribes constitute the statutorily weaker section of society and form a distinct target group under the existing pattern of planning. Due to determined efforts of the government at the central and state levels, the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of ST children has increased considerably at elementary levels of education, even more as compared to their non-tribal counterparts, e.g. the (GER) of ST children at primary stage is 137 as against 116 of their non-tribal counterparts. The corresponding figures for Upper Primary stage are 88.9 as against 85.5; and for elementary stage are 119.7 as against 104.3 (Statistics for School Education 2010-2011). Thus, the participation of these children is now more or less in proportion to their share in population at the elementary school level. Dropouts, though declining over years, are significantly large at this level: the dropout rate of ST children at primary school level is 35.6% as against 27% of their non-tribal counterparts.

## **4. EDUCATIONAL ISSUES AND CONCERNS**

The situation of education of tribal children is related to the quality of education in general, and not solely to being tribal. Of course being a tribal also means that most of the time they are also poor; they live in areas where the provision of education is very weak. So the situation is not only because they are tribals but because of various inter-related issues. Empirical evidence suggests that tribal children possess the basic cognitive abilities and psychological dispositions for successful participation in schools; and their low achievement levels are attributed to school-related variables as would apply to non-tribal students (Gautam, 2003; Reported in Bagai and Nundy, 2009, p.11). Poor performance of tribal students and the below average situation of primary education in tribal areas is driven by inter-related factors, which can broadly be grouped in to: (i) internal factors; and (ii) external factors.

## 5. INTERNAL FACTORS

Internal factors are intrinsic to the structure of the education system, e.g. content and pedagogy, teacher absenteeism and attitude, language of instruction, incentives, limited ownership of education by the community, and can be addressed through appropriate programs.

### 1. *Language of Instruction*

Tribal children have limited contact with the state language, and tend to speak in their home language. Tribal children of Odisha have reported to face language related problems during initial years of schooling (class- I and II); they fail to understand and communicate in Regional language, which is their second language, with their classmates, inmates and teachers (Pradhan and Pattanaik, 2011). Government schools use the state language for teaching and communication, which is most often not familiar to a tribal child at the pre-primary and primary levels. They are, thus, unable to fully comprehend classroom teaching and activities, read in the state language or understand the texts properly.

Gradually introducing the state language can improve the child's potential in mainstream education systems. The use of the tribal language in the initial years can develop a sense of comfort for the tribal child. It must be the first language and taught as a means of acquiring knowledge of tribal culture, ethnicity, literature and the arts. The medium of instruction cannot only be the local language, because of practical constraints. It must, however, start with that. The study conducted by Pradhan and Pattanaik (2011) revealed that tribal students did not show interest to pursue formal education in their home language (s). They opined that education in the medium of their home languages (tribal languages) would not help them to expand the horizon of their knowledge. More importantly, class room transactions must be such that they show respect for the child's language, identity and social background.

### 2. *Curriculum Content - Local Adaptation of Methods and Materials*

Educational content should be molded in the "relevant" culture of the community. Research in child development and pedagogy has indicated that a young child learns concepts better if these are embedded in contexts that are meaningful, i.e. contexts that are local and familiar. The words, terminologies, messages, topics reflected in the syllabus and textbooks are most often alien to tribals. The new National Curriculum Framework, however, recommends a plurality of textbooks meant to create a theoretical space for local specificity. There is a growing focus on workbooks that supplement the learning process in various subjects, and can encourage children to undertake assignments outside the classroom (e.g. conduct science experiments at home with local materials). Other teaching aids to make learning more fun and creative include puppets, model making, singing and drama.

#### Multi-grade Multi-level (MGML) Curriculum

Approximately 80% of rural schools are multi-grade. Children that are drawn into a class, irrespective of their abilities, often exhibit different learning levels, which need to be addressed via appropriate teaching methodologies. The curriculum being followed by the Rishi Valley Institute for Educational Resources (RIVER) is an excellent example of MGML curriculum.

### 3. *Teacher Training and Pedagogy*

Children, in tribal/scheduled areas, are taught by teachers who may or may not be from the tribal community. The presence of tribal teachers, especially from the same community, has shown and improved school participation of tribal children, as these teachers understand and respect the culture with greater sensitivity. Assuming that tribal teachers are a more natural fit, many states have appointed community teachers or para teachers. However, special training on both course materials as well as appropriate conduct with tribal students has to be undertaken even if the teacher has tribal origins.

- a. Tribal children are docile.
- b. Non-tribal children are good in Mathematics.
- c. Tribal language is not the language of power.
- d. Tribal language is not spoken or used by others.

## International Journal of Novel Research in Education and Learning

Vol. 3, Issue 6, pp: (96-102), Month: November – December 2016, Available at: [www.noveltyjournals.com](http://www.noveltyjournals.com)

- e. Tribal language is parochial, and not recognized.
- f. Spoken language is limited to the community.
- g. Tribal language is inferior to the regional language.
- h. Tribal girls are slow in comprehension compared to boys.

Training and capacity building has to be undertaken on a sustained basis to ensure continued motivation on the part of teachers. Studies suggest that teacher motivation contributes more to the teaching-learning process than teacher competence. 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. The following are the key elements of teacher training and pedagogy:

### Training on Material Use

- Orientation on local tribal dialects and use of local material for TLM;
- Development of resource training manuals to assist in classroom teaching
- Tribal primers can be supported by picture dictionary, teacher's handbook, conversational chart and self learning materials for teachers
- Training in the use of interactive, child-centric and gender-sensitive methods of teaching in multi-grade classrooms

### Changes in Perception of Teachers about Tribal Children

- Sensitization to cultural, cognitive and behavioral strengths of tribal children
- Emphasis on attitudinal training of teachers
- Increase motivation levels of teachers can generate interest among tribal children towards education

### Participatory Method of Teaching

- Encourage students to ask questions, learn through projects/ tours, involve students to complete activities prescribed in the syllabus.
- Adopt a process of continuous evaluation
- Emphasize holistic education developing social, moral and spiritual values

Development of appropriate curriculum is a futile exercise in the absence of appropriate training in the use of materials. Research has shown that it is important to train the teachers in the use of dictionaries, flash cards and innovative teaching learning materials.

### 4. Community Participation and Ownership

For the community to be involved in the education process, youth tribal educators and tribal teachers from the community can act as agents of change. They can serve as role models and work together inside and outside the classroom. At the same time, the local tribal community must be empowered, as partners, with a sense of true ownership of the initiative. New and comprehensive ways of engaging communities and/or eliciting participation from communities have to be explored constantly, keeping in mind the changing needs of the community. The following are key elements for effective community participation:

- **Obtain Buy-in from Local Stakeholders:** Gain trust of locals, learn from, and educate them, and build capacity of local tribal youths and community leaders.
- **Assure Community Participation:** Local community can participate and/or can be involved in different activities, e.g. planning exercise; construction of school building; documentation of local folklore, history, traditional medicine etc.; interaction between and amongst the participants, through motivation.

- **Instill Sense of Accountability and Ownership among Children and Parents:** Local community should contribute in terms of cash, kind and labour, for the promotion of education of their children; and own the entire responsibilities of their school, including repair of school building, management of mid-day meal programme, preparation of TLMs, promotion of enrolment, school supervision and monitoring.
- **Empower Communities:** Communities should be empowered to demand appropriate and quality education services from the government through a multi-pronged strategy.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Education is the single most important means by which individuals and society can build capacity levels, overcome barriers, and expand opportunities for their well being. In the context of education of ST children, finding a balance between preserving tribal cultural identity and mainstreaming them seems crucial. It means building education programs that ensure a tribal child's success in mainstream schools. It is seen that the current education system is mostly designed for the dominant group. Hence, there needs to be investment in creating support mechanisms that supplement the integration of tribal children into the formal education system. The support within the education system may include:

1. Using both tribal and state languages during the pre-primary and primary levels
2. Creating supplementary tribal relevant learning materials
3. Introducing monetary/non-monetary incentives for teachers in tribal areas
4. Addressing the health and nutritional needs of tribal children
5. Improving community participation by training tribal teachers and youth
6. Establishing transitional education centres, which focus on mainstreaming tribal children
7. Creating seasonal hostels and residential schools for children of migratory parents

The support mechanisms listed above address some of the issues facing tribal children inside the classroom. However, based on the analysis of the factors contributing to non-enrolment and/or dropout and descriptions of case studies, it is evident that there needs to be more philanthropic investment outside the classroom too. This would provide a solid foundation that leverages these assets and develops stronger individual potential that can transcend the barriers experienced by tribal's today.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Bagai, S. and Nundy, N. (2009). Tribal Education: a Fine balance, Dasra, Mumbai
- [2] Chandramouli, C. (2013). Census of India 2011: Scheduled Tribes in India, Ministry of Home Affairs, New Delhi, India.
- [3] Educational Resource Unit. 2006. "Inventory of Innovative Practices to Strengthen the Public Education System with Special Attention to Children at Risk." Commissioned by Department of Elementary Education, MHRD, GOI and International Labor Organization, New Delhi.
- [4] Fardina & Das "Present position of Basic Education at Orissa", The Samaj, 22nd July, 1999
- [5] Gautam, V. 2003. "Education of Tribal Children in India and the Issue of Medium of Instruction: A Janshala Experience." UN/ Government Janshala Programme. New Delhi.
- [6] Government of India-Ministry of Tribal Affairs (2010). Statistical Profile of Scheduled Tribes in India, New Delhi: available at: [www.tribal.nic.in/](http://www.tribal.nic.in/) Retrived on April 18, 2014.
- [7] Govinda, R. 2002. India Education Report: A Profile of Basic Education. Oxford University Press.
- [8] Jha, J and D. Jhingran. 2002. "Review of Elementary Education for Poorest and Other Disadvantaged Groups: The Real Challenge of Universalisation." Centre for Policy Research. New Delhi.

**International Journal of Novel Research in Education and Learning**

 Vol. 3, Issue 6, pp: (96-102), Month: November – December 2016, Available at: [www.noveltyjournals.com](http://www.noveltyjournals.com)

- [9] Jharkhand Education Project Council. "Bridge Material for Tribal Children." Schooling for Special Focus Group. ([http://www.jepc.nic.in/Schooling\\_of\\_Special\\_Focus\\_Group.html](http://www.jepc.nic.in/Schooling_of_Special_Focus_Group.html))
- [10] Jhingran, D. 2000. "Janshala – Mainstreaming Out of School Children through Bridge Courses". Monthly Newsletter of the Joint GOI-UN System Education Program. April-June.
- [11] Kothai, K. 2007. "Seasonal Migration hinders Education in India". OneWorld South Asia. October.
- [12] Kumar C. Subas, Economic Reforms and Prospective of Economic Cooperation in the SAARC Region, Vision, JNISES, BBSR.
- [13] Lewis, M. A. and M. E. Lockheed. 2007. "Getting All Girls into School." Finance and Development. International Monetary Fund. Volume 44. Number 2. June.
- [14] Mahapatra, B.C. "Policy, Prospects of Elementary Education in India", Janasikhya, Adult Education, SRC, Indore, Vol. V, 2002
- [15] Mahapatra, B.C. "Status and Problems of Women Education in India after 50 years of Independence", An abstract on National seminar, BANISS, 14th & 15th April, 1999.
- [16] Mahapatra, B.C. "Action Plan of EGS for Elimination of Illiteracy: Khargone District", National Journal of Research in Education and Extension, Vol.1, No.1, July, 2005, BU, Bhopal, India.
- [17] Mahapatra, B.C. "Computer for Children with Disable", NCERT, Vocational Education Handbook, 2004-05, PSSIVE, Bhopal., M.P., India
- [18] Mahapatra, B.C. "Dalits in Third Millennium", Swaroop and Sons, Dariya Ganj, New Delhi, 2004.
- [19] Mahapatra, B.C. "Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's Philosophy Towards System of Education", Bulletin of the Tribal Research Institute, Vol., XXXI, No. 1&2, Bhopal, 2004., India.
- [20] Mahapatra, B.C. "Education in Cybernetic Age", S&S Publications, New Delhi, 2006.
- [21] Mahapatra, B.C. "Human Right and Education", Jan Sakharata, Year 4, No. 3, July. 2003, Indore., M.P., India
- [22] Mahapatra, B.C. "Literacy is a Constrain for Economic Development in Orissa", Vidya Megh, Vol. VI, August 2001, Meerut., U.P., India.
- [23] Mahapatra, B.C. "Policy, Prospects of Elementary Education in India", Jan Sakharata, Year 3, No. 2, Dec. 2002, Indore, M.P. India.
- [24] Mahapatra, B.C. "Religion in Education for Social Development", An Abstract National Seminar on Religion & Social 5th & 6th Dec., BANI, MHOW. 1998, M.P., India.
- [25] Mahapatra, B.C. "Reservation in Private Sector: Prospect and Modalities" chapter published in book "Reservation in Private Sector Prospects and Modalities" published by BANISS, 2007
- [26] Mahapatra, B.C. "Socio-Economic Development of Bhill Tribe in M.P.: Present Scenario", Bulletin of the Tribal Research Institute, Vol, XXIX, No. 1&2, Bhopal, 2003., M.P., India.
- [27] Mahapatra, B.C. "Socio-Economic Development of Santhal Tribe in Orissa: Present Scenario", Bulletin of the Tribal Research Institute, TRI, Govt. of M.P., Bhopal, No. Dec., 2001., India.
- [28] Mahapatra, B.C. "Status and Problems of Women Education in India After 50 Years of Independence", An abstract, National Seminar on Women Empowerment 14th and 15<sup>th</sup> April 1999, BANI, MHOW, Indore., M.P., India.
- [29] Mahapatra, B.C. "Training for Sustainable Development", Swaroop and Sons, New Delhi, 2005.(Joint Author)
- [30] Mahapatra, B.C. Published paper at International Conference on "Learning Organization in the Learning World" as paper on "ICT and Distance Education: Challenges and opportunities in Higher Education" to be held on 18-22<sup>nd</sup> April, 2005 at Bangkok, Thailand.

**International Journal of Novel Research in Education and Learning**

Vol. 3, Issue 6, pp: (96-102), Month: November – December 2016, Available at: [www.noveltyjournals.com](http://www.noveltyjournals.com)

- [31] Mahapatra, B.C. Published paper in International Conference on “Achieving Equality in Education: New Challenges and Strategies for Change on “Challenges and Opportunities in Special Teachers Training Programme through Distance Mode” The International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment, to be held from 16-21 July 2006, Putra World Trade Centre, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- [32] Mishra, M. 2007. “Status of Elementary Education in Tribal Areas of Orissa”. Department of Tribal Education, Orissa.
- [33] Mishra, R.C., Sinha, D and J.W. Berry. 1996. Ecology, Acculturation and Psychological Adaptation: A Study of Adivasis in Bihar. International Association for Cross-Cultural Psychology.
- [34] Nair, P. 2007. “Whose Public Action? Analyzing Inter-sectoral Collaboration for Service Delivery: Identification of Programmes for Study in India.” International Development Department, Economic and Social Research Council. February.
- [35] National Tribal Commission. 2008. “Education of Tribal People in India.” March.
- [36] Noronha, A. 2006. “Education of Tribal Children, from Social Mobilization to Poverty Alleviation.” OneWorld South Asia. March.
- [37] Pradhan, N. and J.K. Pattanaik (2011): Challenges in Education of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Children: Case Study of an Ashram School, The Ravenshaw Journal of Educational Studies, vol.1., issue 1. December, 2012., Department of Education, Ravenshaw University, Cuttack, Odisha
- [38] Rajasekaran, G. 2008. “Tribal girls till the land in Bt cotton fields.” Newindiapress.com.
- [39] Ramachandran, V., Mehrotra, N. and J. Kameshwari. 2007. “Incentives in Elementary Education – do they make a difference?” Plan International India. February.
- [40] Report of Human Right in Education, 2002, New-Delhi
- [41] Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. 2002. “Education of Tribal Children in India.”
- [42] Shamsudin, Removing economic Problems of Minorities: Some Suggestions, Yojana, Vol. 39, July 1995.
- [43] Sharma, R.C. (1984). Effect of Incentive Schemes on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Girls. SIERT, Rajasthan.
- [44] Statistical Hand Book of Orissa, 1996-99, BBSR, Orissa
- [45] UNESCO Chair, IGNOU, New Delhi, 2000
- [46] UNESCO Report on World Education and Human Rights, 2002
- [47] UNESCO. 2002. “Innovations in Non-Formal Education: A Review of Selected Initiatives from the Asia-Pacific Region.” Bangkok.
- [48] UNO Report on Education, Bangkok, 2001
- [49] [www.tribal.nic.in/Demographic Status of Scheduled Triba Population in India/](http://www.tribal.nic.in/Demographic%20Status%20of%20Scheduled%20Triba%20Population%20in%20India/) Retrived on April 18, 2014.
- [50] [www.tribal.nic.in/Tribal Profile at a Glance-May 2013/](http://www.tribal.nic.in/Tribal%20Profile%20at%20a%20Glance-May%202013/) Retrived on April 18, 2014.
- [51] Yosso, Tara J. 2005. “Whose Culture has Capital? A Critical Race Theory Discussion of Community Cultural Wealth.” Race Ethnicity and Education, Vol 8, No. 1, pp. 69-91.