

# STATUS AND PROBLEMS OF EDUCATIONAL SCENARIO OF PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE TRIBAL GROUPS IN ODISHA : GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

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*Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PTGs) of India as well as in Odisha assume special significance because of their being one of the most marginalised community of the country. Living in the far flung areas these tribal groups are the first to be hit by vagaries of nature, such as drought, heat stroke, infectious diseases, economic and cultural displacement etc. Even after sixty years of independence and in spite of initiation of dozens of welfare schemes in the post-independence era, the living condition of PTGs in Odisha has not improved to an appreciable level. They are still living with primitive agricultural practices, lowest literacy rates, widespread poverty with dismal picture of income and expenditure and are at the lowest rung of human index. The paper is divided in two sections. The first section focus on the changes takes place in literacy level, male-female gap in literacy, gross enrollment ratio, and dropout rates of Schedule Tribes in comparison with general population in Odisha. The second section includes the changes in educational scenario of three Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups i.e. Kutia Kandha, Dongria Kandha and Lanjia Saora Kutia and explores the possible reasons for low level of literacy and educational backwardness and the possible suggestions for educational development in tribal areas. The paper uses both primary and secondary data. The secondary data collected from the Census of India, Economic Survey of Odisha, Annual Reports of Ministry of Tribal welfare, Selected Educational Statistics, Department of Education in India. Primary data was collected through structure questionnaire and focus Group discussions.*

## Introduction

Education can act as a powerful tool for reducing poverty and unemployment, improving health and nutritional standards, and achieving a sustained human development-led growth (World Bank, 2004). In recent years sustained and high levels of economic growth provide a unique opportunity and momentum for faster social sector development (Sen, 2007). Investing in education plays a key role in meeting the World Bank's social development objectives, which support inclusive growth, social cohesion, and accountability in development (Sen, 2007). Professor Amartya Sen (2007) recently emphasized education as an important parameter for any inclusive growth in an economy. The policies have to focus on inclusive rather than divisive growth strategies. Education also prevails in illiterate societies, where it is imparted orally and by mass behavior. Modern education can play the role of "Catalyst" in bringing sea changes in the sphere of social, political, economic fields. One of the important reasons for failure of development activities in the society by various developmental agendas is the prevalence of acute illiteracy and ignorance, combined with superstitions among the rural masses (Malyadri, 1990). Hence to ward off economic backwardness, social deprivation spreading of education is regarded as one of the most effective and forward-looking instruments.

It thereby equips and trains a person to think analytically in forming attitudes and to perform his roles adequately in specific as well as in varied situation. The goal of free and compulsory education through the age of 14 is enshrined as a Directive Principle of India's Constitution. The

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Indian Constitution assigns special status to the Scheduled Tribes (STs). Traditionally referred to as adivasis, vanbasis, tribes, or tribals, STs constitute about 8% of the Indian population. There are 573 Scheduled Tribes living in different parts of the country, having their own languages different from the one mostly spoken in the State where they live. There are more than 270 such languages in India. Realizing that Scheduled Tribes are one of the most deprived and marginalized groups with respect to education, a host of programs and measures were initiated ever since the Independence. Elementary education is a priority area in the Tribal sub-plans from the 5th Five Year Plan. Education of ST children is considered important, not only because of the Constitutional obligation but also as a crucial input for total development of tribal communities.

Odisha accommodates about 81, 45,081 Scheduled tribes which is 22.13% of the state population and 9.66% of the total tribal population of the country. Socially and educationally the Scheduled Tribes (ST's) are among the most disadvantaged groups in Odisha. Poverty and illiteracy is very high among the tribal people and therefore the social disparity and inequality has prevailed in the society. Despite the government's continued concerns in this area, particularly for the scheduled tribes population, and a substantial increase of resources devoted to education, the current rate of improvement in education amongst the scheduled tribes population is yet insufficient to meet the state's as well as the country's needs. The paper has examined the changes takes place in literacy level of Schedule Tribes in comparison with general population in Odisha, male-female gap in literacy, gross enrolment ratio, drop out rates, explore the possible reasons for low level of literacy and educational backwardness and the possible suggestions for educational development in tribal areas.

## **Data and Method**

Both Secondary and primary data was used for the paper. The secondary data were collected from Census of India, Annual Reports of Ministry of Tribal Welfare, Government of India, Economic survey of Odisha, Government of Odisha, Selected Educational Statistics, reports of Planning commission (2005-06), Ministry of social justice and empowerment (2003-04). In addition to the documents, different census reports, various books and journals are referred and used. The primary data was collected in Kandhamal and undivided KBK districts of Orissa covering three Primitive Tribal communities i.e. Kutia Kandha, Dongria Kandha and Lanjia Saora. A total of 800 household were interviewed covering 49 revenue villages for data collection. Interview method and structured & unstructured questionnaire methods were used to gather information from the informants. Simultaneously, Group discussion and informal interview methods have been used. Observation has been conducted through semi-participant methods.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Education in Odisha**

Odisha has the low literacy rate. According to 2001 census over all literacy rate of the country is 65.8 per cent where as, this figure for Odisha is 63.08 percent. The literacy rate of scheduled Tribes in Odisha is a cause for concern, as it has consistently been lower than that of the total population. The literacy rate among Scheduled Tribes, which was 22.31 per cent in 1991, increased to 37.37 per cent in 2001. Male literacy has increased from 34.4 per cent to 51.5 per cent during 1991-2001. The gap between the literacy rate of the total population and the ST population is very wide i.e. 11.58 per cent. Female literacy continues to be an area of concern despite notable achievement during last decade. ST female literacy increased from 10.2 per cent to 23.36 per cent during 1991-2001. ST

female literacy is lower by approximately 27 percents point as compare to overall female literacy of the general population (table 4). The school attendance rates for rural areas as well as for the depressed sections of the population are much lower, despite substantial educational advances that has been made over time in Odisha.

Sundargarh (52.76%) and sambalpur (52.00%) districts show the higher proportion of tribal literacy rates. Koraput district has a lowest percentage (19.98%) of literacy among tribes during 2001. From the table 4 it is seen that in case of both general and tribal population the male literacy rate is higher in comparison to female literacy rate. The ST female literacy rate is showing an increasing trend from 1991 to 2001. ST male literacy rate has increased 17% from 1991 to 2001 where as ST female literacy has increased 13.16 % in the same period.

**Table 1 Literacy Rate of General and ST Population in different Decades**

Year	Odisha					
	Schedule Tribe			General		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1971	16.38	2.58	9.46	38.30	13.92	26.18
1981	28.32	5.81	17.01	47.09	21.12	35.37
1991	34.44	10.21	22.31	63.1	37.7	49.09
2001	51.50	23.36	37.37	75.95	50.5	63.08

**Source:** Census of India

Low literacy rates are matched by less than satisfactory educational attainments across all levels of primary, secondary and tertiary education. Many schools in tribal areas suffer from high dropout rates. Children either never enroll or attend for the first three to four years of primary school, only to lapse into illiteracy later. Table 5 shows that very high percentage of population among tribal communities attained the primary schooling rather than higher level of education. Among tribal literates, 44.7 per cent are either without any educational level or have attained education below primary level. The proportions of literates who have attained education up to primary and middle levels constitute 28.7 per cent and 13.7 per cent respectively. Literates, who are educated up to matric/secondary/higher secondary etc., have a share of 11 per cent only. Graduates and above are 1.5 per cent while nontechnical & technical diploma holders constitute less than half per cent (0.4 per cent)

**Table 2 Levels of Education of Scheduled Tribes**

Education level	Literate without educational level	Below primary	Primary	Middle	Matric/higher secondary	Technical & non technical diploma	Graduate and above
	4.4	40.3	28.7	13.7	11	0.4	1.5

**Source:** Census of India, 2001

The main factor responsible for low level of literacy and educational backwardness among tribal communities are acute indigence of the tribal people, want of positive motivation for education,

lack of adequate educational infrastructure in their neighborhood, and deficient in communication system. Besides these factors, a large proportion of the poorer tribal children, on account of the rising cost of the schooling and economic burden can not afford to benefit from them. Most tribe tends to use their children for ancillary services that would bring in some added income for their staying families. It is therefore important to examine the policies and programmes being followed and their effective implementation in the state, as well as to undertake special studies to identify the socio-cultural factors inhibiting faster progress in literacy and education among the scheduled tribes communities and constraints relating to infrastructure and funds on education, to make satisfactory progress in increasing literacy among these population groups

## **Literacy in Odisha**

The literacy rates of the State have always been less than the all India rates. In 1991, the position of the State was 23rd with respect to the total literacy rate while in 2001; it slipped even further to the 26th position. The total literacy rate of the State of Odisha as per 2001 Census is 63.61 while that of India is 65.38. The percentage of tribal literacy in Odisha is 37.37. The gap of over all literacy and tribal literacy is 26 percent. While literacy of tribal in Odisha was 9.46 in 1971, it was 13.96 in 1981. Again it was raised in to 27.10 in 1991 and during 2001 it is 37.37. The growth rate of tribal literacy in the state reveals the pace of literacy among the tribal people. 15 districts have high literacy of more than 64 % to 80 % where as seven districts have literacy below 50 %. Four districts Koraput, Malkangiri, Rayagada and Nabarangpur have below 40 percent literacy.

## **Tribal Female literacy in Odisha**

Literacy among tribal women has been lagging behind all other sections - urban males, urban females, rural males, rural females, SC males (urban / rural), SC females (urban / rural) and tribal males. Female literacy rate in the state is 50.97 where as the tribal female literacy rate is 23.37 as per the census of India 2001 and the gap is 27 percent. IN case of low female literacy seven districts of Odisha have below 30 % women literacy as revealed from the Census of India 2001. These districts are Kalahandi( 29.56) Nuapada(26.01), Gajapati(28.91), Koraput(24.81), Rayagada(24.31) Nawarangpur (21.02) and Malkangiri (21.28). The reasons for tribal girls non-enrolment and/or drop-out from the school are many; her preoccupation in economic pursuits, whether visible or invisible, nonrelevance of the learning experiences in the present day school to the needs of the tribal girls, modern education acting as deculturising agent/or alienating force in tribal societies

## **Drop-out Rate of Schedule Tribe Students in Odisha**

The dropout rate among children belonging to scheduled tribes is highest when compared to general population. The data shows that the dropout rate among the scheduled tribes in primary stage i.e. 1 to VIIth class is about 80.06%. The dropout rate among S.T. girls is about 79.88%. It clearly shows that the tribal parents are not in favour of girls education. The reasons for dropout are, poverty, inaccessibility for good educational institutions, absence of nursery schools, lack of awareness about advantage and utility of education, language problem (medium of instruction), lack of sufficient infrastructure facilities and teaching aids, lack of good number of qualified and committed teachers, unsuitable school holidays, defective course content for the tribal areas and local cultural traditions

## Literacy Sample Households

The historical Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RCFCE) Act of Aug, 2009 recognized education as Fundamental Right for every child in the age group between 6 to 14 years. It is the obligation of the Central and State Governments to ensure availability of a neighborhood school and also to ensure that children belonging to weaker section and disadvantaged groups are not discriminated against providing school infrastructures, learning equipments, quality of elementary education, training for teachers and monitor the functioning of the schools to achieve target of 80% literacy by the end of 11<sup>th</sup> Plan Period. However we are well aware that percentage of literacy among PTGs is dismal.

## Educational Status among Dongria Kandha

The table 3 shows that the bulk of the surveyed populations in the study villages are illiterate i.e. 81.76 per cent. The overall literacy rate of Dongria Kandha is just 18.24 per cent. The percentage of overall literacy has increased by 7.08 per cent from 2001 to 2009. The female literacy rate is very low i.e. 12.21 per cent at present. But remarkable achievement of 9 per cent increase is observed in female literacy in last 8 years i.e. from (%) 2001 to 2009. The literacy gap between male and female has been reduced from 17.58 per cent to 12.57 per cent during the same period. Male literacy has increased from 20.83 per cent in 2001 to 24.78 per cent in 2009<sup>1</sup>. The above data reveals that much attention has been given on female education after the 10<sup>th</sup> Five Years Plan by STSC development department, GoO. The Girl Residential Model School (GRMS) plays an important role in this regards. The site selection of GRMS of the Project Authority is of paramount importance. The project has 2 GRMS, one at Sagada in Muniguda Block and the other one at Chatikona in Bissam Cuttack block due to geographical barrier in Dongria Kandha area.

**Table 3 Change in Literacy Rate and Literacy Gap of the Sample Households Among Dongria Kandha**

Literacy	2001		2009		Changes	ST Literacy (%) as per 2001 census	
	Person	Percentage	Person	Percentage	Percentage	District	Odisha
Male	257	20.83	198	24.78	3.95	31.16	51.48
Female	49	3.25	106	12.21	8.96	10.07	23.37
<b>Total</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>11.16</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>18.24</b>	<b>7.08</b>	<b>20.23</b>	<b>37.37</b>
<b>Literacy Gap between male and female (%)</b>		<b>17.58</b>		<b>12.57</b>	<b>5.01</b>	<b>21.09</b>	<b>28.11</b>

**Sources:** Data of 2001 Baseline Survey 2001, SCSTRTI, Odisha

Data of 2009: Field survey, 2009

The table 4 indicates that a majority of 47.75 per cent (Out of 81.76%) of illiterate are in the age group between 15 to 59. Thus attempt should be made by the State Government and Central Government to enhance the literacy rate of the above age group. Percentage of illiterate in the age group up to 14 years is 29.27 per cent. Special attention is required to provide necessary educational facilities and support to this groups.

**Table 4 Percentage Group-wise Illiteracy of the Study Villages.**

Age Group wise illiterate	Male	%	Female	%	Total	%	Cumulative Percentage
0 to 5 years	142	17.77	118	13.59	260	15.60	15.60
6 to 14 years	139	17.40	89	10.25	228	13.68	29.27
15 to 59 years	299	37.42	497	57.26	796	47.75	77.02
60 and above	21	2.63	58	6.68	79	4.74	81.76
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>601</b>	<b>75.22</b>	<b>762</b>	<b>87.79</b>	<b>1363</b>	<b>81.76</b>	

Source: Field survey, 2009

Out of total population of 1667 (males 799 and females 868) only 304 are literates. A majority of 236 (14.16%) have read up to Primary level, followed by 35 (2.10%) up to ME School, 28 (1.68 %) up to High School and only 5 (0.30%) up to Intermediate. In nutshell, a majority of literates have achieved up to Primary level of Schooling (Table 5).

**Table 5 Level of Education Among Dongria Kandha**

Sex		Primary	Middle	High School	Intermediate	Total
Male	Number	141	29	24	4	198
	Percentage	17.65%	3.63%	3.00%	0.50%	24.78%
Female	Number	95	6	4	1	106
	Percentage	10.94%	0.69%	0.46%	0.12%	12.21%
<b>Total</b>	Number	236	35	28	5	304
	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>14.16%</b>	<b>2.10%</b>	<b>1.68%</b>	<b>0.30%</b>	<b>18.24%</b>

Source: Field survey, 2009

## **Educational Status among Lanjia Saora**

The table 6 shows that bulk of the surveyed populations are illiterate (64.15%) against the overall literacy of Lanjia Saora as 35.85 per cent in 2009. The percentage of overall literacy has increased by 3.15 per cent from 2001 to 2009. In spite of special attempt adopted by SC and ST department through Residential Girl School in the study area and School and Mass Education through SSA, NPEGEL and KGBV, the female literacy has increased from 24.16 per cent in 2001 to 26.74 per cent in 2009 thus adding an additional 2.59 per cent female literate in last 8 years. However male literacy has concerned from 41.32 per cent in 2001 to 45.42 per cent in 2009 which accounts for 4.10 per cent additional male literates and around 1.5 per cent more than the female literacy during the same period. **2**

**Table 6 Change in Literacy Rate and Literacy gap of the Sample Households  
Among Lanjia Saora**

Literacy	2001		2009		2001 to 2009	ST Literacy as per 2001 census*	
	Person	Percentage (%)	Persons	Percentage (%)	Change (%)	District (%)	Odisha (%)
Male	412	41.32	273	45.42	4.10	31.16	51.48
Female	243	24.16	169	26.74	2.59	10.07	23.37
<b>Total</b>	<b>655</b>	<b>32.70</b>	<b>442</b>	<b>35.85</b>	<b>3.15</b>	<b>20.23</b>	<b>37.37</b>

*Source: Data for 2001, Baseline Survey 2001, SCSTRTI, and Odisha, Field study, 2009*

\* Census of India, 2001

An attempt has been made to find out the percentage of illiterate among different age group of the population. The data indicates that a majority of 41.52 per cent (out of 64.15%) of illiterates are in the age group between 15 to 59. Percentage of illiterate among the population in the age group up to 14 years is 17.68 per cent which need special attempt to bring then in to mainstream of education. Out of 73.26 per cent of illiterate female, more than 50 per cent are in above 15 years as compare to 30.45 per cent (Out of 54.58%) of the male in the same age group (Table 7). The maximum percentage of illiterate comprises workforce of the population.

**Table 7 Age Group-wise Illiteracy Among Lanjia Saora of the Sample Population**

	Age Group	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total	Percentage
i	0 to 5 years	75	12.48%	61	9.65%	136	11.03%
ii	6 to 14 years	41	6.82%	41	6.49%	82	6.65%
A (i+ii)	Up to 14 years	116	19.30%	102	16.14%	218	17.68%
B	15 to 59 years	183	30.45%	329	52.06%	512	41.52%
C	60 and above	29	4.83%	32	5.06%	61	4.95%
<b>Grand Total (A+B+C)</b>		<b>328</b>	<b>54.58%</b>	<b>463</b>	<b>73.26%</b>	<b>791</b>	<b>64.15%</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2009*

Among the 442 (35.85%) of literate, a majority of 245 (19.87%) have read up to Primary level, followed by 121 (9.81%) up to high School, 52 (4.22 %) up to ME School and 14 (1.14%) up to Intermediate, 8 (0.65%) up to graduate and only 2 (0.16%) up to Post Graduate (Table 102). In nutshell, a majority of literate have achieved up to Primary level of Schooling



**Table 8 Level of Education Among Lanjia Saora**

Sex		Primary	Middle	High School	Inter-mediate	Graduate	PG	Total
Male	Persons to the total population	136	33	81	13	8	2	273
	Percentage	22.63%	5.49%	13.48%	2.16%	1.33%	0.33%	45.42%
Female	Persons to the total population	109	19	40	1	Nil	Nil	169
	Percentage	17.25%	3.01%	6.33%	0.16%	Nil	Nil	26.74%
Total	Persons to the total population	245	52	121	14	8	2	442
	Percentage	19.87%	4.22%	9.81%	1.14%	0.65%	0.16%	35.85%

*Source: Field Survey, 2009*

### **Educational Status Among Kutia Kandha**

The table 9 shows that the overall literacy rate of the sample population is 29.89 per cent. We found that male literacy is 39.34 percent of total population and female literacy is 20.25 per cent. The percentage of overall literacy has increased by 13.45 per cent during the period 2001 to 2009. Though the female literacy rate is very low (20.25 %) at present but remarkable increase of 16.46 per cent is observed in last 8 years (from 2001 to 2009). The literacy gap has been reduced from 26.33 per cent to 19.09 per cent during these years. There are many social, cultural and economic factors responsible for the poor female literacy. One of the causes for the poor literacy in the area is related to language efficacy. The tribal population particularly Kandha population have a dialect of their own known as Kui, but the teaching medium is Oriya. In addition, the prevailing social mind set restricts the girl child to go to school in post-puberty age. Moreover, girls are engaged to look after their siblings and to manage other household works. In such cases, girls remain socially isolated from their enrolment and attendance in schools. However, where male literacy is concerned it has increased from 30.11 per cent in 2001 to 39.34 per cent in 2009. This accounts for 9.23 per cent additional literate males during the same period. The above data reveals that much attention has been given on female education since after 10<sup>th</sup> Five Years Plan. The Girl Residential Model School (GRMS) plays an important role in this regards. The project has one GRMS in Belghar.

**Table 9 Change in Literacy Rate and literacy Gap of the Sample Households  
Among Kutia Kandha**

Literacy	2001		2009		Changes (%)
	Person	Percentage (%)	Person	Percentage (%)	
Male	383	30.11	323	39.34	9.23
Female	52	3.78	163	20.25	16.46
Total	435	16.44	486	29.89	13.45

*Sources: Data for 2001, Baseline Survey SCSTRTI, 2001*

*Date for 2009, Field Survey, 2009*



An attempt has been made to find out the percentage of illiterate among different age group of the population (Table 10). The data indicates that a majority of 44.53 per cent of illiterate are in the age group between 15 to 59 years. Thus attempt should be made by the State Government and Central Government to tap the population who has crossed the upper limit of Primary Education. Percentage of illiterate among the population in the age group up to 14 years is 19.56 per cent which needs special attempt to bring this group in to mainstream of education.

**Table 10 Age Group-wise Illiterate Person Among Kutia Kandha.**

Age Group	Male	Percentage (%)	Female	Percentage (%)	Total	Percentage (%)	Cumulative (%)
0 to 5	93	5.72	90	5.54	183	11.25	11.25
6 to 14	70	4.31	65	4.00	135	8.30	19.56
15 to 59	293	18.02	431	26.51	724	44.53	64.09
60 and Above	42	2.58	56	3.44	98	6.03	70.11
<b>Total illiterate</b>	<b>498</b>	<b>30.63</b>	<b>642</b>	<b>39.48</b>	<b>1140</b>	<b>70.11</b>	
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>821</b>	<b>50.49</b>	<b>805</b>	<b>49.51</b>	<b>1626</b>		

*Source: Field Survey, 2009*

The table 11 shows that 25.28 percent of total sample have read up to primary level, 2.46 per cent to the middle level, 1.85 per cent to high school level, 0.18 per cent to intermediate level, 0.60 per cent to graduate level and 0.60 per cent to postgraduate. The sharp fall in educational attainment beyond primary level is due to the poor economic conditions of the households that compel them to be engaged in different activities to compliment HH income.

**Table 11 Level of Education Among Kutia Kandha.**

Sex	Primary	Middle	High School	+2/ Intermediate	Graduate	PG	Total
Male	258	32	28	3	1	1	323
Percentage	15.87 %	1.97 %	1.72 %	0.18 %	0.06 %	0.06 %	19.86 %
Female	153	8	2	Nil	Nil	Nil	163
Percentage	9.41 %	0.49 %	0.12 %	Nil	Nil	Nil	10.02 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>411</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>486</b>
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>25.28 %</b>	<b>2.46 %</b>	<b>1.85 %</b>	<b>0.18 %</b>	<b>0.06 %</b>	<b>0.06 %</b>	<b>29.89 %</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2009*

## Comparative Education Status Among the Sample PTGs

Literacy gap between male and female is recorded more for Kutia Kandha at (19.09%) followed by Lanjia Saora at (18.68%) and low among Dongria Kandha at (12.57%). Among three selected PTGs both male and female literacy rate are high among Lanjia Saora than other two PTG. Male literacy is 45.42 per cent, 39.34 per cent and 24.78 per cent among Lanjia Saora, Kutia Kandha and Dongria Kandha respectively. Female literacy is low among Dongria Kandha (12.21%) where it is 20.78 per cent among Kutia Kandha and 26.74 per cent among Lanjia Saora. Among the literates 32.8 per cent of Lanjia Saoras are above Matriculation followed by Dongria Kandha (10.85%) and Kutia Kandha (7.2%). The data reveals that Lanjia Saoras are educationally advanced than Kutia Kandha and Dongria Kandha (Table 12).

**Table 12**  
**Education status among PTGs .**

S. No.	Name of the PTGs	Dongria Kandha (%)	Lanjia Saora (%)	Kutia Kandha (%)
1	Literacy	18.24	35.85	29.89
2	Male Literacy	24.78	45.42	39.34
3	Female Literacy	12.21	26.74	20.25
4	Literacy Gap between male and female	12.57	18.68	19.09
5	Percentage of literate above Matriculation	10.85	32.80	7.20

**Source:** Field Survey, 2009.

### **Factors Contributing Low Literacy Among Schedule Tribes in Odisha**

Socio-economic factors contribute significantly to disparities in literacy and educational attainment among women in rural and urban areas. As Dreze pointed out, “educational disparities, which contribute a great deal to the persistence of massive inequalities in Indian society, also largely derive from more fundamental inequalities such as those of class, caste and gender,” (Dreze, 2003: 982). High poverty rates and dependence on agriculture call for increasing rates of child labor force participation among many of the tribes in India. The tribal dropout rate is extremely high relative to the mainstream population. Majority of the tribal parents are not showing much interest to send their children to the school due to economic reasons and they considered their children as economic asset to them. Because of their illiteracy they do not know the value of education. Large majority of the school age children among the tribals are not psychologically comfortable to enroll in the school and their mental attitudes always bending towards the traditional cultural activities. Even the children contribute their family incomes. The informal education to the illiterate parents is much needed to solve this kind of problem in the tribal areas

The main reason of this is that the school timing and the working hour of the tribals normally clash and since the tribal children help support their parents in earning, they either do not enroll in the school or dropout if enrolled. Hence, one of the first requirements to ensure better rate of enrolment and higher retention of school children among the tribals is to change the school timing looking at the work schedule of the tribals.

Lack of suitable teachers is one of the major reasons for the slow growth of education in tribal areas. Most of the teachers employed for imparting education to the tribal children show little appreciation of tribal way of life and value system. They approach tribal people with a sense of superiority and treat them as ‘savage and uncivilized’ and hence fail to establish proper rapport with their students. The Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes Commission’s report says that a teacher in the tribal areas must have a thorough knowledge of tribal life and culture. He must speak tribal language. Only so can he be in a position to act as a friend, philosopher and guide to the tribal people. Actually the gulf between teachers and taught can be best reduced by appointing teachers from the tribal community itself or a separate cadre of teachers for tribal areas, with some inducements, should be created to serve the educational needs of the tribal society.

One of the major problems in tribal education is that of language. Most of the tribal languages

and dialects are in the most rudimentary stage and there is hardly any written literature. Most of the states impart education to tribal and non-tribal children alike through the medium of the regional language, which makes the education uninteresting and also hurts tribal sentiments.

Books are not supplied to the schools at the session beginning. It creates problems for teachers and students.

Most of the tribal villages are scattered. This entails long travels to attend schools. Unless the school situated very close to their villages and its site approved by the local people the result shall not be encouraging. School building also plays an important role in the growth of education among the tribal folk. Due to mismanagement, bungling and sometimes financial constraints, the building and sometimes-financial constraints, the building is seldom suitable to run an educational institution.

Most of the primary schools run in the tribal areas are “Single teacher-managed whose presence in the school is more an exception than a rule”. The enthusiasm of tribal people in the education of their children also depends considerably on the timing of school hours in different seasons. It should not clash with their important socio-economic activities.

More allocation of funds and opening of schools do not go far in providing education to the tribals. Formal education has not been necessary for the members of tribal societies to discharge their social obligations. Hence they should be prepared to accept education and it should be presented to them in such a way as to cut the barriers of superstition and prejudice. There is still a widespread feeling among the tribals that education makes their boys defiant and insolent and alienates them from the rest of their society, while the girls turn modern or go astray. Since some of their educated boys felt alienated and cut off their bonds with their families and villages after getting education and good employment. Some of the tribal groups vehemently oppose the spread of education in their midst. Besides, some of their superstitions and myths also play their part. Some tribal groups believe that their gods shall be angry if they send their children to schools run by ‘outsiders’.

Surrounding or environments is one of the importance factors influence for the development of a person generally and particularly in educational development. Most of the tribal parents are agricultures and labours; they have little knowledge relating to modern world and modern environment. Their environment narrows that created narrow mentality. And most of tribal fathers are addicts to alcoholic and other beverage items that creating some problem in mentally and economically end result students will fail exams.

### **Educational Development Initiatives**

The state government have undertaken various measures like providing free education, scholarships, Hostel facilities, free distributions of text books, garments and imparting special coaching to prepare them for requirement to state and all India services as well as for seeking admission to engineering/medical courses. In order to increase the enrollment and reduce the drop out rate at primary school level, mid-day meal scheme has been introduced. At present 246 Residential High schools, 109 Ashram Schools, 37 Kanyashram, 143 residential Sevasharam are operating under SC/ST development department of Odisha (Economic Survey of Odisha 2006). Eleven **Ekalavya Model Residential Schools (EMRSs)** are functioning for providing quality education to the ST students in Odisha. 1548 primary school hostels (40 seated each) in TDP areas and 400 hostels for tribal girls in KBK districts for operating to check drop out rate and to promote ST girl education. Pre-matric scholarship is being paid @ Rs 600 and Rs 630 per moth for 10 months in year for boys and girls boarders respectively for pursuing their studies from class I to X in the schools/hostels managed by ST&SC development department. Besides, the day-scholars are

paid @ Rs 100-p.m for boys and @ Rs 150 for girls per month. Provision of two pairs of free school uniform for the Children from Class-I to VIII from the current academic session and Supply of Free Bi-cycle for both Boys and Girls belonging to the ST Category as an incentive to pursue their studies in higher classes.

A large number of teachers have undergone attitudinal training which has had a significant impact on the attitudes of non-tribal teachers towards tribal children. Continuing efforts are being made to sustain the impact of the attitudinal training through block and cluster level meetings of teachers by including items for discussion on these issues in the monthly meetings. A linguistic survey and mapping has been completed by the Academy of Tribal Dialects and Culture in 4 districts viz. Kalahandya, Gajapati, Raygada and Keonjhar. The State has also explored the use of folklore in primary education, which would help to tap the rich tradition in arts, crafts, music, songs, etc. in tribal societies. Stories and riddles have been collected for use by the teachers and classrooms. Seven Tribal Primers in seven tribal languages i.e. Saora, Santali, Kui, Kuvi, Koya, Bonda and Juana were prepared.

## Conclusion

Education is a tool of transmission of culture, accumulated knowledge and experience of a society. It is also the tool for economic betterment and societal change. Unless the educational level of the tribals in Odisha increase, development will bound to be slow. The major problem for majority of them is the absence of Schools and school related human and physical infrastructure. Therefore, in order to promote a socio-economically integrated healthy society in state, tribal communities will have to elevate both economically and educationally. Thus to achieve for educational development, the following suggestions may be adopted:

- The literacy and educational status is very low among the selected PTGs in general and Dongria Kandha and Kutia Kandha in particular. The chronic problem of teacher absenteeism needs priority attention. This aspect has to be addressed with all sincerity of efforts so that the teaching – learning situation is improved among the Kandha. Thus emphasis should be given on priority basis for promotion of education. Necessary infrastructure and the appointment of teacher belonging to the community should be encouraged. If no such teacher is available, others with a positive attitude and understanding about tribal community should be employed in the area. Teachers must be provided free accommodation facilities in the school campus.
- Responsibility may be laid down to teachers for enrollment of all children from the age group of 6 to 14 years
- Adult literacy programmes should be promoted to bring the illiterate persons who have dropped out or never enrolled for schooling.
- The schooling facility must be provided on demand of community and enough community mentors must be mobilized to spontaneously come forward to run and manage the school.
- The children should be provided text books in their own language in initial stages of their schooling and gradually they should be exposed to standard textbooks in state language at a later stage.
- The textbooks should have local specific contents, contexts and narration by which the children can relate learning to their real life situation.

- The timing of the school should be as per the availability of children and holiday calendar as per the holiday pattern of the locality.
- Moreover the education administrators should be more responsive and responsible to the education of the children. Continuous monitoring of schools (Academic and administrative) would definitely render insights to the functional problems and its solution at the earliest.
- Special attention should be given on the completion of Residential Girl Model School in Belghar Micro Projects, which should have been completed by this time.
- Teaching is imparted in tribals' mother tongue at least up to the primary level. Educated tribal youth are given employment as teachers, wherever possible.
- Curricula for meta skill upgradation are to include aspects of tribal games and sports, archery, identification of plants of medicinal value, crafts art and culture, folk dance and folk songs, folk paintings etc.
- Emphasis is laid on vocational/professional education. Polytechnics are set up for studies in subjects like forestry, horticulture, dairying, veterinary sciences, polytechnics
- Emphasis should be given on investing in greater financial and educational resources for the educational development of tribals.

### Footnotes

1. *The ST male, female and total literacy rate of the district is 31.16%, 10.07 and 20.23% where as the state ST literacy rate of male, female and total is 51.48%, 23.37% and 37.37% respectively in 2001 census.*
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