

The Tribal Educational Status in India: Galore Challenges and Issues

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Abstract -Education is the sole means to establish peace and unity in the world and education is the key to tribal development. The present study is to analyses status of tribal education with growth of education, literacy rate and gap between Scheduled Tribes and other social categories from the years to 2011, gross enrollment ratio, dropout rates and gender parity index in India. Along with this, it tried to highlight the status of tribal communities' education, the galore issues and challenges of play roles as an educational barrier. Tribal community in both rural and urban is facing various social and psychological problems in getting education. Educating tribals is not common task like educating non- tribals. They need special efforts by the government. The study is purely depends on secondary data of census of India, published and unpublished reports of Government and Non-Government Organizations and the observations done by researcher in the field. This paper is a conceptual framework and understanding related to tribal education and related challenges in India.

Key words: Scheduled Tribes, Education, Literacy, Dropouts

Introduction

Education is one of the means of the development, which transfer society from backward to develop one. The nation's culture, socio-economic progress is based on educational status of the citizen. Education is one of the primary agents of transformation towards development. Education is in fact, an input not only for economic development of tribes but also for inner strength of the tribal communities, which helps them in meeting the new challenges of life. It is an activity, or a series of activities, or a process, which may either improve the immediate living conditions or increase the potential for future living. It is the single most important means by which individuals and society can improve personal-endowments, build capacity levels, overcome barriers, and expand opportunities for a sustained improvement in their well-being. Education is an important parameter for any inclusive growth in an economy. Therefore, education is an important avenue for upgrading the economic and social conditions of the Scheduled Tribes. Education is in fact, an input not only for economic development of tribes but also for inner strength of the tribal communities, which helps them in meeting the new challenges of life. Literacy and educational attainment are powerful indicators of social and economic development among the backward groups in India. Education, especially in its elementary form, is considered of utmost importance to the tribals because it is crucial for total development of tribal communities and is particularly helpful to build confidence among the tribes to deal with outsiders on equal terms.

Despite the sincere and concerned efforts by the government for the overall development of the scheduled tribes, they are still far behind in almost all the standard parameters of development. They are not able to participate in the process of development, as they are not aware of most of the programmes and policies made for their upliftment. This is mainly due to the high incidence of illiteracy and very low level of education among the tribal people. Hence, the educational status of the scheduled tribes and the role of governance in this direction are highly essential. It is well known that the educational background of tribes is very discouraging as compared to the rest of the population. Therefore, education is an important avenue for upgrading the economic and social conditions of the scheduled tribes.

Status of Tribal Population in India

Tribal Communities live, in various ecological and geo-climatic conditions ranging from plains and forests to hills and inaccessible areas. Tribal groups are at different stages of social, economic and educational development while some tribal communities have adopted a mainstream way of life, at the other end of the spectrum. Constitution of India under Article 366 (25) refers Scheduled Tribes as those communities, who are scheduled in accordance with Article 342 of the Constitution, says that only those communities who have been declared as such by the President through an initial public notification or through a subsequent amending Act of Parliament will be considered scheduled tribes. 'Article 342 provides for specification of tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within tribes or tribal communities, which are deemed to be for the purposes of the constitution, the scheduled tribes in relation to that State or Union Territory.

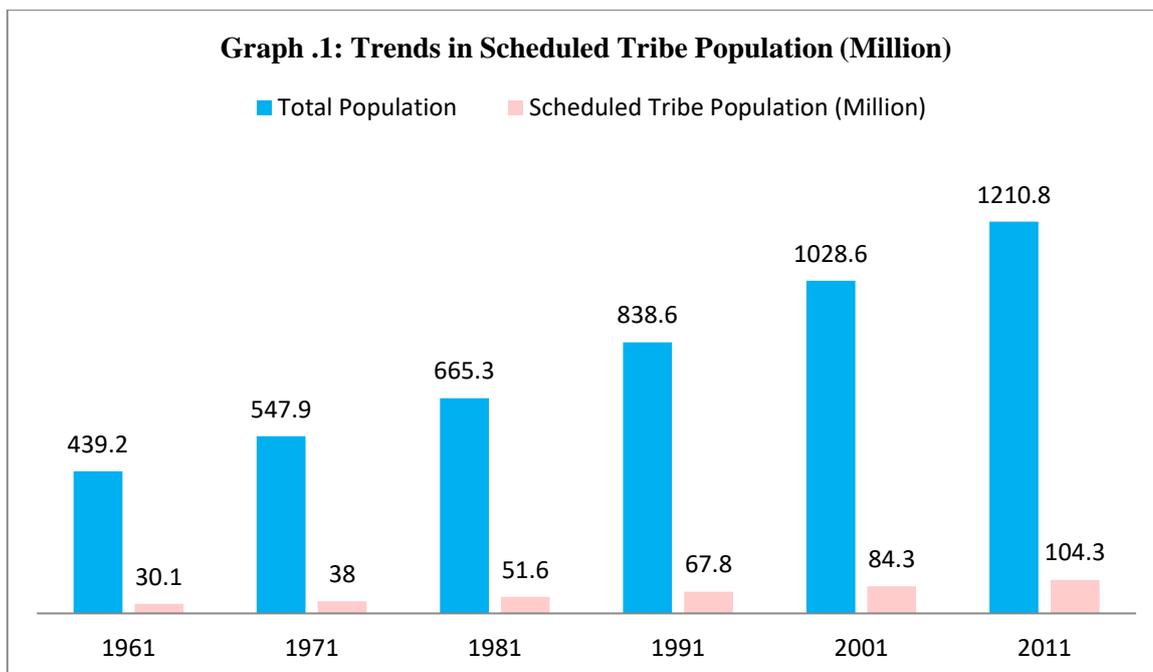
The Scheduled Tribes are notified in 30 States/ UTs and the numbers of individual ethnic groups etc. notified, as scheduled tribes are 705, there are certain Scheduled Tribes, 75 in number known as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups. The tribal population of the country, as per 2011 census, is 10.43 crore, constituting 8.6 percent of the total population. 89.97 percent of them live in rural areas and 10.03 percent in urban areas. The decadal population growth of the tribal's from census 2001 to 2011 has been 23.66 percent against the 17.69 percent of the entire population. The trend in ST population since Census 1961 is illustrated in (Table-1 and Graph-1.)

Table.1: Trends in Proportion of Scheduled Tribe Population

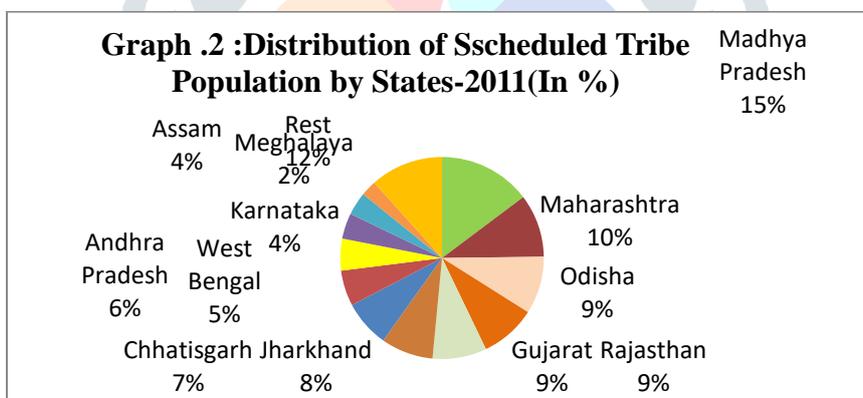
Census Year	Total Population (in millions)	Scheduled Tribes Population (in millions)	Proportion of STs Population
1961	439.2	30.1	6.9
1971	547.9	38.0	6.9
1981 #	665.3	51.6	7.8
1991 @	838.6	67.8	8.1
2001 \$	1028.6	84.3	8.2
2011	1210.8	104.3	8.6

Excludes Assam in 1981 @ Excludes Jammu & Kashmir in 1991
\$ The figures exclude Mao- Maram, Paomata and Purul sub divisions of Senapati district of Manipur, census 2001.

Source: Statistical Profile of Scheduled Tribes in India, 2013



The STs inhabit two distinct geographical areas. The Central India and the Northern Eastern Area, More than half of the scheduled tribe population is concentrated in Central India, i.e., Madhya Pradesh (14.69%), Chhattisgarh (7.5%), Jharkhand (8.29%), Andhra Pradesh (5.7%), Maharashtra (10.08%), Odisha (9.2%), Gujarat (8.55%) and Rajasthan (8.86 %). The other distinct area is the North East (Assam, Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur, Meghalaya, Tripura, Sikkim, and Arunchal Pradesh). (Illustrated in Graph- 2.)



Source: Presentation “Scheduled Tribes in India, Census 2011” by Registrar General of India, May 2013

Literacy Trend and Rate of Tribal and Total Population of India

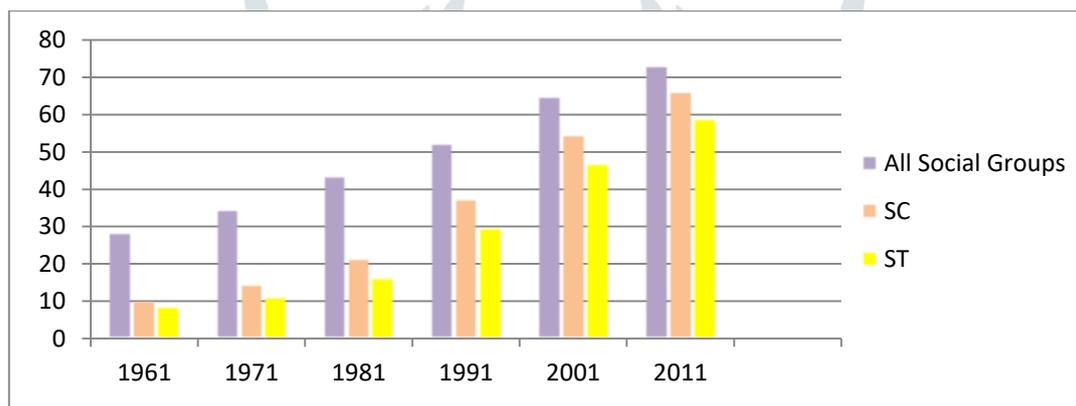
Literacy rate is defined as percentage of literate among the population aged seven years and above. Literacy is an important indicator of development among tribal groups. Although literacy levels of STs have improved, the gap in literacy levels both for tribal men and for women has not declined significantly. Infact, the gap increased 1971 to 1991, falling thereafter, to a little above the 1971 level. The literacy rates of tribes, total population, and the comparison between them from census 1961 to census 2011.

Category/ Census Year	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
Total Population	28.3	34.45	43.57	52.21	64.84	72.99
Scheduled Tribes	8.53	11.30	16.35	29.60	47.10	58.96
Gap	19.77	18.15	19.88	22.61	18.28	14.03

Source: Statistical Profile of Scheduled Tribes in India 2013

The percentage of literacy of tribes increased from 8.53 percent in 1961 increased to 58.96 percent in 2011 while the corresponding increase of the total population was from 28.30% in 1961 to 72.99% in 2011. Literacy Rate increased by 11.86% points from 2001 to 2011 for ST and 8.15% points for total population, during the same period. CR has however, all along been lower both for males and for females Sts as compared to SCs and Total Population. All the data are illustrated in (Table 2 and Graph 3)

Graph. 3: Comparative Literacy of All Social Groups, SC and ST Population (1961-2001)



Source: Statistical Profile of Scheduled Tribes in India, 2013

The male- female gap in literacy rate decreased from 24.41% points in 2011 for STs and for the total population; it declined from 21.59% points in 2001 to 16.25% points in 2011.

Gross Enrolment Ratio of ST Students

Gross Enrolment Ratio for any stage (Different Classes) is defined as percent of the enrolment in the stage to the estimated child population in the respective age group. The Gross Enrolment Ratio for Sts at the Elementary Stage (I-VIII) from 1990-91 to 2010-11. The GER for STs in the elementary stage has improved considerably from 1990-91 to 2010-11. The GER for ST girls improved from 60.2 in 1990-91 to 119.8 to 118.7 in 2010-11 overall the GER of STs was more pronounced as compared to other social groups. The GER of ST children as compared to the All Categories Children at different stages of education as per statistics of School Education 2010-11, this is illustrated in (Table 3.)

Classes	ST	All Categories
Classes I-V (6-10 Years)	137	116
Classes VI- VIII (11-13 Years)	88.9	85.5
Classes I-VIII (6-13 Years)	119.7	104.3
Classes IX-X (14-15 Years)	53.3	65
Classes I-X (6-15 Years)	106.8	96.2
Classes XI-XII (16-17 Years)	28.8	39.3
Classes IX-XII (14-17 Years)	41.5	52.1
Classes I-XII (6-17 Years)	94.8	86.5

Source: Statistics of School Education 2010-2011

The gross enrolment ratio for ST Children is at 119.7 at the elementary level (class I-VIII) compares favorably with the All India Level (104.30), but it falls drastically at the secondary level (53.3) with a gap of almost 12 as compared to the All India level and the GER at post matric level falls further to 28.8, 10.5 points lower than the All India level. It is quite clear, that the reasons for high dropout of ST children after class VIII and then again, after class X has to be enhanced to enable them to take advantages of the overall growth of the economy. It implies that the tribal enrolment declines significantly in higher class.

Dropouts Rates

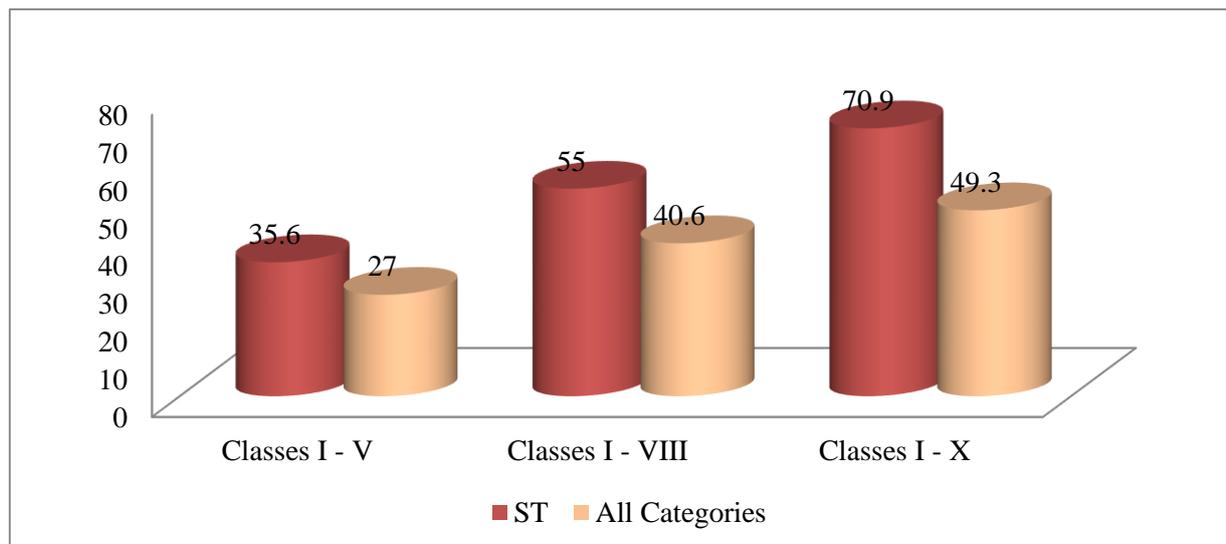
Dropout rate in the proportion of pupils/ students who leave school during the year as well as those who complete the grade/ year level but fail to enroll in the next grade/ year level the following school year to the total numbers of pupils/students enrolled during the previous school year. It is a critical indicator reflecting lack of educational development and inability of a given social group to complete a specific level of education. In the case of tribals, dropouts rates are still very high- 35.6% in classes I to V; 55 % in classes. I to VIII; and 70.9% in class I to X in 2010-11 and significantly higher than the all India, illustrated in (Table 4 and Graph 4)

Class	Boys		Girls		Total		
	ST	All	ST	All	ST	All	Gap
Classes I – V	37.2	28.7	33.9	25.1	35.6	27	8.6
Classes I – VIII	54.7	40.3	55.4	41	55	40.6	14.4
Classes I – X	70.6	50.4	71.3	47.9	70.9	49.3	21.6

Source: Statistics of School Education 2010-2011

Reducing the ST dropout rates in class I to X is a challenge. Bringing them back and to gainfully utilizing those who have already dropped out requires extreme care, sensitivity, imagination and meticulous planning. Table reveal that out of every 100 ST students who entered class-I, while almost 67 percent completed class V, only 41.9 percent completed classes VIII and 13.9 percent .studied upto class XII. The comparative data for all categories is that of 100 students, entering classes, 79 percent completed classes V, about 64 percent completed classes VIII and 30.3 percent studied upto class XII.

Graph 4: Drop Out Rates (DOR) Total



The overall picture of dropout rates for All India depicts that it has been steadily declining from 1990-91 to 2009-10 but a slight incline in 2010-11 for both boys and girls from class I to X. However, dropout rates are considerable lower in the classes' I-V than the higher classes (I to X). This indicates that the dropout rates are alarmingly higher in the higher classes. Among girls, the dropout rate in 2010-11 was highest in the states of Odisha followed by the State of Meghalaya and Madhya Pradesh. Among boys, it was highest in the state of Odisha followed by the state of Meghalaya and Jharkhand.

Gender Parity Index (GPI)

Gender Parity Index is a socio-economic index usually designed to measure the relative access to education of males and females. In its simplest form, it is calculated as one quotient of the number of females by the number of males enrolled in a given stage of education (primary, secondary etc.) Gender Parity Index (GPI) for STs is seen to be highest in the Classes I-V and Lowest in classes XI-XII. This is illustrated in (Table. 5)

	Scheduled Tribe	All Categories
Classes I – V	1.01	1.01
Classes VI – V	0.95	0.95
Classes I – VIII	0.99	0.99
Classes IX – X	0.86	0.88
Classes I – X	0.97	0.97
Classes XI – XII	0.76	0.86
Classes IX –XII	0.82	0.87

Classes I – XII	0.96	0.96
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Source: Statistics of School Education 2010-2011

Factors affecting Tribal Education

1. **Medium of Language** - One of the major problems in tribal education is that of language. It is the constraints, which prevents tribal children in accessing education. 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 hurts tribal sentiments.
2. **Nature of habitat** - A tribal lives in villages, which 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. The physical barriers create hindrances for the children of a tribal village to attend the school in a neighboring village.
3. **Social Factors** - 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 tribal's 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 bond with their families and villages after getting education and 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.
4. **Lack of Interest in Formal Education** - In many states, tribal children are taught through the same books, which from the curriculum of non-tribal children of the urban and rural areas of the rest of the state obviously, the content of such books rarely appeals to the tribal children who come from different cultural backgrounds.
5. **Lack of Suitable Teacher** - 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, treat them as 'savage and uncivilized', and hence fail to establish proper rapport with their students. The Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes Commissions report says that a teacher in the tribal area must have a thorough knowledge of tribal life and culture. He must speak tribal language. Only so can 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.
6. **Attitude of other Students** - Attitude of other student is one of the important factors for the promotion of tribal students higher education i.e., environment factors is one of the crucial factors for the development. His negative attitude we can reflected in university and other higher educational centre mainly located in big cities.
7. **The problem of Absenteeism** - It is a serious problem in tribal areas. One sees a large number of students on the rolls but the actual attendance is low, and the number of students passing out at the final examination is even lower. The real problem is to create such economic conditions as could be conducive to the students developing sufficient interest in their studies.

8. **Attitude of the parents / family environment** - Surrounding or environments is one of the important factor 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 as education does not yield any immediate economic return, the tribal parents prefer to engage their children in remunerative employment, which supplements the family income.
9. **Communication Problem** - Communication is one of the key factors affecting the development of tribal education. Due to isolation, tribal facing problem for expressing modern and regional languages. Understanding tribal language very difficult generally in the case of society and particularly in teachers. So the students facing problems for discussing their doubt with teachers. Therefore, their doubt continuing and automatically tribal students became the last in the class.
10. **Lack of Proper monitoring** - Proper monitoring is hindered by poor coordination between the Tribal Welfare Department and School Education Department.
11. **Lack of Awareness** - Most of the tribals are not aware about their welfare schemes and functioning done by government for their betterment in education sector.

Problems of Tribal Education

Analysis and study of data's clearly underlines that in spite of constitutional guarantees and persistent efforts tribal communities, continue to lag behind the general population in education. The reasons for this can be categorized as external, internal, socio-economic, and psychological- the external constraints are related to problems and difficulties at levels of policy, planning, implementation and administration. Internal constraints refer to problems associated with the school system, content, curriculum, medium of instruction, pedagogy, academic supervision, monitoring, and teacher related problems. The third set of problems relates to social, economic and cultural background of tribal's and psychological problems of first- generation learners.

There are disadvantaged individuals and groups. These deprived sections of the community have to struggle hard for survival and development. Education has been acclaimed as the prime mover of development. It opens the doors to modernization. The development of disadvantaged groups like scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, the minority groups, etc. cannot be achieved simply by formulating welfare schemes for backward classes but it require a multispectral, multidepartment approach.

Suggestions

Education is the most effective instrument by which individuals and society can build capacity levels, overcome barriers and expand opportunities for their well-being. Government has been making several efforts to education by extending special educational facilities various educational policies and programmes in Central as well as state level. However, there is the problem shown in education development in tribal community. Hence, there needs to be investment in creating support mechanism that supplement the integration of tribal children into the formal education system. There are some suggestions, which help in solving the educational problems:

1. **Language of Instruction** - Basic level of education is given priority and at this stage, if education is imparted in tribal dialect they will understand teaching in better way. 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. Tribal 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, classroom transactions must be such that they show respect for the child's language, identity and social background and all the relevant study material should be supplied in local languages of tribes.

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., context 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.)
3. **Teacher Training and Pedagogy** - Teachers who may or may not be from the tribal community teach children, in tribal / scheduled areas. It is suggested to appoint more tribal teachers and female teachers in the tribal areas. The teachers in tribal areas should consider the ecological, cultural, psychological characteristics of tribal children carefully. 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.
4. **Community Participation and Ownership** - 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, for the effective community participation key elements must be- (a) gain trust of locals, learn from, educate them, and build capacity of local tribal youths and community leaders, (b) assure community participation, (c) instill sense of accountability and ownership among children and parents (d) Communities should be empowered to demand appropriate and quality education services from the government through a multi- pronged strategy.
5. **Literacy Awareness Campaign** -- Proper awareness campaign should be organized to create the awareness about the importance of education. Extensive literacy campaign in the tribal dominated districts may be undertaken on a priority basis to literate the tribal.
6. **Attitude of the tribal parents** - The attitude of the tribal parents toward education should be improved through proper counseling and guidance.
7. **Stipends and various scholarships** - Scholarships will help the students to purchase study related materials and thus purchase study related materials, thus present scholarship norm should be revised, and rupees should be increased. Since higher education among the tribes is less, special ST scholarships should be provided to the tribal students pursuing higher education, particularly in medical, engineering, and other vocational streams.
8. **Residential Schools** - More schools that are residential should be established in each states and districts and extended up to PG level in tribal areas.
9. **Social Security**- Social security of students, especially of adolescent girls is of great concern in residential schools.
10. **Proper Monitoring** - Higher-level officials should check the functioning of schools frequently relating to the teaching methods, working hours, and attendance registers.

Conclusions

The people directly relate a nation's development to the accessibility and opportunities to avail educational facilities. Education is a driving force of history to civilization could flourish without educating its people. Article 46 of the Indian Constitution stress to promote the ST and SC people with special care in the educational and economic establishment. The spread of education among the ST during the last four decades has been quite uneven. Ignorant and illiteracy among the tribals should be minimized and rooted out by providing proper education and awareness programmes. To improve the educational and economic status of the tribal, opportunities for basic and adult education with training leading to better employment government should make available adequate grants. There is an urgent need for various government interventions, planners and policy makers, non- government organizations to address the problems and allocate more funds in the central and state budgets for tribal education. Easy access and more opportunities should be provided to the tribal children in order to bring them to the mainstream of economic development. It is very important to make various policies and programmes for tribal development but now a day. It is necessary to put eyes in the implementation and results of the implemented programmes on real basis. By this, government can know the real status of their functioning and welfare.

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