

TRIBAL EDUCATION IN INDIA: GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE

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Abstract

India is a country of multi-racial groups which is reflected by different cultures, religions, languages and racial groups. These social groups are at different levels of development. The Scheduled Tribe is one of the principle groups which have a history of discrimination. They are economically, politically and educationally backward. Right from independence Government of India has taken many progressive initiatives for the holistic developmental of the tribal. In this endeavour, the Right to Education bill 2009 was a landmark step in realizing the cherished goal of universal elementary education which will also certainly help tribal community. It is a well established fact that there is a close relationship between level of education and economic prosperity. An educated person is given more respect and than an uneducated. So receiving education is essential for every individual. Education is considered as one of the important tool for the socio-economic development of tribal. This paper attempts to highlight different constitutional safeguards and promotive schemes undertaken by the Government India for empowerment of education among tribal

Key Words:-*Tribal Education, Government initiative, Empowerment*



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1. Introduction

Education is recognised as one of the powerful means of social and economic development. Studies also suggest that an additional year of schooling leads to economic returns that are greater than the cost of education itself (Haddad, 1990). Education helps in reducing the socio-economic gap between privileged and unprivileged. It helps in creating an egalitarian society where every individual have an equal chance of excel as per his/her capability Education has special importance for the STs who are facing multiple challenges (Dar & Najjar, 2018). Education helps them to adjust with the developing society and to progress
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economically, politically and socially. Education gives them the awareness and strength to face the challenges of day to day life. The STs are backward in every walk of life. They have been marginalized and suppressed even before independence and are still being alienated. Main cause of this injustice is their illiteracy. Hence to ward off economic backwardness, social deprivation spreading of education is regarded as one of the most effective and forward-looking instruments (Patel, 1991). The Government of India is devoted and sincerely worried for the progress and development of its citizens especially the Scheduled Tribes. Government have made consistent efforts for their development which is obvious from the Five Year Plans. Special developmental programmes and protective measures are taken by Government for augmenting pace of tribal development. However, the results of these schemes could not be achieved even after seven decades of independence. According to Census-2011, the number of scheduled tribes in India is 10, 42, 81,034. It is 8.6% of the total population of India. A total of 9, 38, 19,162 people belonging to scheduled tribes reside in rural areas whereas 1, 04, 61,872 people in urban areas. The scheduled tribes are 11.3% of the total population of rural areas and 2.8% of urban areas. There are about 550 tribes in India¹. Tribal are living in the length and breadth of the country. Most of the areas inhabited by tribal are under developed. To eliminate the social and educational backwardness of tribal, Constitution of India grants special provisions for enhancing education among tribal (Sharma, 1977).

2. Constitutional Safe Guards

According to (Singh & Shukla, 1975), the constitution of India has made various provisions to safeguard the interests of the tribal

(i) Article 15 of the constitution provides equal rights and opportunities to all the citizens of India (including the tribal) without any discrimination.

(ii) Article 16(4), 320(4) and 335 reservation in employment is made for the tribals.

(iii) Article 330, 332, 334 seat have been reserved for the tribals in the legislatures (in Lok Sabha and State Vidhan Sabhas).

(iv) Articles 19(5) the tribals can own property and enjoy it in any part of the country.

(v) Article 275 a large amount of money can be taken from the consolidated fund of India to be spent on the tribal welfare activities.

¹ <https://www.jagranjosh.com/general-knowledge/schedule-tribes-in-india-1448689214-1>
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(vi) Article 338 empowers the President of India to appoint a Commissioner to look after the tribal welfare activities.

(vii) Article 339(2) the Central government can give directions to the states in the formation and execution of tribal welfare plans, projects and programmes.

(viii) Article 275(i) the Centre is required give grants-in-aid to the States for approved schemes of tribal welfare.

(ix) Article 164 empowers the state government to appoint a separate minister to look into the welfare of the tribal.

(x) Article 46 consists of provisions that protect the economic and educational interests of the tribal.

(xi) Articles 224 give instructions to the administrator to take special care to protect tribal interests in “scheduled Tracts” or “areas”.

(xii) Article 342 gives powers to the President of the India to declare on the recommendation of the Governor some groups or communities as “Scheduled Tribes”.

(xiii) Recently, the 93rd Constitution amendment Bill making education a fundamental right for children between six and 14 has secured the Parliament’s nod. With the law backing the Centre’s Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Human Resource Minister, believed this as the second revolutionary step after adult suffrage.

The Right to education Bill

According to (Sripati & Thiruvengadam, 2004), the Right to education Bill emphasises following points for empowerment of tribal education in India.

- State shall guarantee a school in every child’s locality. Each school shall obey the rules to certain minimum standards defined in the Bill.
- Government schools shall give free education to all children attending school. Private schools shall give admission to at least 25% of children from weaker sections; no fee shall be charged to these children.
- School Management committees (SMC) mainly composed of parents will manage government schools. Teachers will be assigned to a particular school; there will be no transfers.
- The National Commission for Elementary Education shall be constituted to monitor all aspects of elementary education.

- *There is mixed evidence on the ability of SMCs in improving quality of schools and learning outcomes of children*

3. Committees and Commissions

In addition to the constitutional provision stated above, from time to time the Government of India appointed committees, commissions and study teams to monitor the progress of tribals and suggest new ways for their development. Examples of some of the Commissions and Study teams: (i) Backward Classes Commission (1953-55), headed by Kaka Kaleikar; (ii) the study team of Social Welfare and Welfare of Backward Classes (1958-59) headed by Renuka Ray; (iii) the Scheduled Areas and Scheduled tribes Commission 1960-61 under the chairmanship of U.N. Dhebar; (iv) the Second Backward Classes Commission 1979-80 under the chairmanship of B.P. Mandal, etc.²

4. Different Educational Schemes are:

A. Strengthening Education among Scheduled Tribe Girls in Low Literacy District

This scheme is specifically meant for tribal girls. The objective of scheme is to reduce the gap in education attainment between tribal and non tribal girls and to ensure that all tribal girls attend schools in the identified Districts or Zones, especially in Naxal hit areas and in areas occupied by Primitive Tribal Groups (PTG) (**Dung, & Pattnaik, 2013**). The scheme stress on lowering dropout rate in schools by providing better environment for education. Mainly purpose of the scheme is maintenance of tribal hostels. It also provides housing and school amenities in the locales where there are no such amenities (**Chaudhari, 2010**). In order to encourage tribal girls tuitions, incentives and awards are also provided. Under the scheme 54 recognized districts in 12 States and 1 Union Territory where the tribal population is 25% or more and tribal female literacy rate is below 35% are covered. In addition, any other tribal block in a district, other than abovementioned 54 recognized districts, which has tribal population 25% or above and tribal female literacy rate below 35% are also included(**Yadappanavar, 2003**). The priority is given to Naxal affected areas and PGT areas. The scheme is implemented by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and independent bodies of the State Governments/Union Territory(**Dung, & Pattnaik, 2013**).

² <http://www.indiaenvironmentportal.org.in/files/file/Tribal%20Committee%20Report,%20May-June%202014.pdf>

B. Coaching For Scheduled Tribes

Those tribal students which come from poor families find very difficult to compete with students who come rich families. In order to overcome this handicap, Scheduled Tribe candidates are provided free quality coaching so that can compete with others. The scheme provides coaching to tribal students for various competitive examinations viz. Civil Services/State Civil Services/Other Exams conducted by UPSC like CDS, NDA, etc./professional courses like Medical, Engineering., Business Administration/Banking/Staff selection Commission/Railway Recruitment Boards/insurance companies, etc. The financial rules of the scheme have been amended during 2007-08. The scheme covers coaching fees, monthly stipend @ Rs.1000/- per tribal student per month and boarding/lodging charges for outstation students @ Rs.2000/- per tribal student per month till he completes coaching.³

C. Pre-Matric Scholarship

Scholarship under the Scheme will be available for studies in India only and will be awarded by the Government of the State/Union Territory to which the applicant belongs i.e. where she/he is domiciled. Objectives of the scheme are:

(a) To support parents of tribal children for education of their children studying in classes IX and X so that the number of drop-out, particularly in the transition from the elementary to the secondary stage is reduced.

(b) To increase participation of tribal children in classes IX and X of the pre-matric stage, so that they perform better and have a better chance of progressing to the post-matric stage of education⁴.

D. Post-Matric Scholarship for Scheduled Tribes Students

Under the scheme financial support is given to the tribal students so that they can continue education after matriculation in recognized institutes. The scheme includes distance courses, professional/non-professional and technical/non-technical courses. The scheme is implemented by the State Government and UT Administrations, which receive 100% Central assistance over and above the committed liability which is required to be borne by them from their own budgetary provisions. The Scheme is in functional since 1944-45.⁵

³ www.india.gov.in/scheme-coaching-scheduled-tribes

⁴ www.socialjustice.nic.in/SchemeList/Send/23?mid=24541

⁵ www.tribal.nic.in/ScholarshiP.aspx

E. Up gradation of Merit of ST Students

It is special and remedial coaching that is provided to tribal students in classes IX and XII in order to upgrade their merit. The objective of the scheme is to remove weakness subjects and prepare them to compete in different competitive examination and to make entry in course like medical and engineering. Centre provides hundred percent assistance to states and union territories. Every year Rs.15, 000/- per student per year is provided by centre ⁶

F. Girls' Hostels for Scheduled Tribes

Girl's hostels scheme was started in Third Five-Year Plan with the aim of providing residential facilities to tribal girls in pursuit of education. As educational attainment of tribal girls is far less than the non-tribal girls, Government started construction of hostels for tribal girls. The expenditure of construction is shared by the state and central government on 50:50 bases. During 1999-2000 funds were released to the States/UTs for construction of 29 girl's hostels and 11 girl's hostels during 2000-2001. The hostels are meant for tribal girls in primary, middle, secondary, college and university. The scheme of Girls' Hostels, which started in the Third Plan, is a helpful in spreading education among tribal girls, whose literacy still stands at 49.40 % as against the general female literacy of 64.60 % as per 2011 census⁷.

G. Boy's Hostel for Scheduled Tribes

Boy's hostels scheme was started in 1989-90 under the same pattern as the Girl's Hostels. During 2000-2001, funds were released for construction of 15 boy's hostels. The aim of construction of boy's hostel is to facilitate the expansion education among tribal boys. The scheme has same condition as for girl's hostel.⁸

H. Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship Scheme (RGNF)

Under the scheme financial assistance is provided to tribal students for pursuing higher education. The fellowship can be given for a period of five years only. Any tribal student who has passed post graduation can avail of this fellowship. This Scheme was introduced in the year 2005-06. Every year 667 fellowships are provided to tribal students. The scheme is being implemented by University Grant Commission (UGC) on behalf of the Ministry of

⁶⁶ www.tribal.nic.in/writereaddata/Schemes/EDUPostMatricScholarshipPMSforSTstudents010413.pdf

⁷ www.indiaspend.com/in-odishas-residential-schools-for-tribal-girls-education-comes-at-a-cost

⁸ www.india.gov.in/centrally-sponsored-scheme-hostels-scheduled-tribe-girls-and-boys

Tribal Affairs. Under the scheme those tribal students, who have passed post-graduation from a UGC recognised university can apply⁹.

I. Scheme of Top Class Education for ST Students

Ministry of Tribal Affairs has started a new Central Sector Scholarship Scheme of Top Class Education for tribal Students from the academic year 2007-08. Each institute has been allocated five wards, with a ceiling of total 635 scholarships per year (**Deshpande & Yadav, Y, 2006**). The family income of the tribal students from all the sources should not be more than Rs. 2.00 lakh per annum. The tribal students will be provided scholarship for full tuition fee and other non-refundable dues in respect of Government/Government-funded institutions. However, there will be a ceiling of Rs.2.00 lakh per annum per student for private sector institutions and Rs.3.72 lakh per annum per student for the private sector flying clubs for Commercial Pilot Training (**Sharma & Singh, 2020**). A new scholarship scheme has been introduced by Ministry of Tribal Affairs for tribal students. The main aim of the scheme is to encourage bright tribal students to pursue studies at degree and post degree studies in identified institutes. Under the scheme 127 institutes have been identified covering the field of management, medicine, engineering, law and commercial courses (**Bhawan, 2014**).

J. Establishment of Ashram School

The scheme of Ashram Schools was launched in 1990-91 In order to provide residential facility to the tribal students in order increase their enrolment and overall literacy rate, the scheme of Ashram Schools was launched Government. Fund for the scheme is provided by the State and Centre Governments on 50:50 basis, while cent percent assistance is given to union territories (**Mishra, 2005**).

K. Vocational Training in Tribal Areas

This scheme was introduced in 1992-93 and is being implemented through the State Governments/UT Administrations, Institutions or Organizations set up by Government as autonomous bodies, educational and other institutions like local bodies and cooperative societies and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO). Under this scheme vocational skill are provided to the tribal boys and girls in order to make them stand on their own feet. (**Ullah & Malik 2020**). Through this scheme tribal students can avail of the different employment opportunities in government and private sector or they establish their own business units. Main aim of this scheme is to develop the skills of the tribal youth in order to enable them to

⁹ <http://14.139.60.153/handle/123456789/3174>

gain employment/self employment opportunities (Goel & Vijay, 2017). A vocational centre can give training to 100 tribal at a time and hostel facility is provided to 50 students. Each student is provided training two trades of his/her choice for a period of three months (Akshay, et al., 2012).

L. National Overseas Scholarship Scheme for Scheduled Tribes

Under the scheme financial help is given to tribal students studying outside country at master level courses, Ph.D. and Post-Doctoral research programmes, in the field of Engineering, Technology and Science. The selected candidates are given cost of tuition and other educational fees charged by the foreign university etc., maintenance and other grants along with travel expenses (Gautam, 2013). In addition passage grants are also available to candidates belonging to tribal who are in receipt of merit scholarship for postgraduate studies, research or training abroad (excluding attending seminars, workshops, conferences) from a foreign government/organization or under any other scheme where cost of passage is not provided. Scheme of National Overseas Scholarship has been revised in 2007-08 as Plan scheme. 15 awards would be sanctioned to tribal students per year. The tribal students are given all educational charges including travel and maintenance expenses (BANSODE, et al., 2016).

Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS)

In the perspective of the trend of providing quality residential schools for the promotion of education in all regions and habitations in the country, the Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) for tribal students take their place among the Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas, the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas and the Kendriya Vidyalayas. Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) are constructed and maintained in States/UTs with grants under Article 275(1) of the Indian Constitution (Dash, et al., 2020). The aim of EMRS is to give quality middle and high stage education to tribal students in far-flung areas and to ensure that tribals have educational opportunities available at par with non-tribal (Dash, 2018).

This would be achieved by:

- a) *Integrated physical, mental and socially relevant development of all students enrolled in each and every EMRS. Students will be empowered to be change agent, beginning in their school, in their homes, in their village and finally in a larger context.*
- b) *Focus differentially on the educational support to be made available to those in Standards XI and XII, and those in standards VI to X, so that their distinctive needs can be met.*

c) Support the annual running expenses in a manner that offers reasonable remuneration to the staff and upkeep of the facilities.

d) Support the construction of infrastructure that provides education, physical, environmental and cultural needs of student life.¹⁰

5. Conclusion

Various educational schemes are being implemented by the Government for enabling the tribal to upgrade their education levels and skills. The objective of these schemes also include increase in the enrolment and retention of tribal in the educational institutions, reduction in dropout rates and increase in their representation in jobs and in higher educational and professional institutions. It is clear that government is very concerned about the development and promotion of education among tribal. That is why many constitutional provisions and promotive schemes are being implemented by government time and again. In nut shell, sound policies, good governance and effective implementation of these schemes in letter and spirit can augment pace of tribal education.

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¹⁰ . http://www.voiceofresearch.org/doc/Mar-2015/Mar-2015_7.pdf

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