

IMPACT OF EDUCATIONAL PROVISIONS IN MODEL RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS TO ENHANCE THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF TRIBAL STUDENTS IN KERALA

By

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Abstract

A "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world", says Nelson Mandela. It is the basic condition for the development of the "whole man" and vital instrument for accelerating the well-being and property of all in every direction of his culture, tradition, customs and creed. Education is said to be excellent and efficient if it transforms an ordinary person to those capable of extraordinary performance. India now has one of the largest higher education systems in the world in terms of number of institutions and the second largest in terms of number of students. The constitution 85th amendment Act, 2002 inserted Article 21 A in the constitution of India to provide free and compulsory education for all children in the age group of 6 to 14 as a fundamental right in such a manner as the state may, by law, determine. A tribe is a traditional social group of people who follow their own customs and traditions. In this backdrop the study focuses on the role of Model Residential Schools in enhancing the educational performance of tribal students in Kerala.

Keywords: *tribals, educational provision, enhance, discrimination.*

Introduction

Education is said to be excellent and efficient if it transforms an ordinary person to those capable of extraordinary performance. Article 46 of the constitution provides that the state shall promote with special care the educational and economic interest of the weaker sections of the society and in particular, of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation. Literacy and educational accomplishment are powerful pointers of social and economic development among the backward groups in India. At present, the tribes lag behind not only the general population but also the

Scheduled Caste population in literacy and education. Education is in fact, an input not only for economic development of tribes but also for inner strength of the tribal communities. It also benefits them in meeting the new challenges of life and prepare them to cope up with the changes. Article 46 of the constitution provides that the state shall promote with special care the educational and economic interest of the weaker sections of the society and in particular, of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.

Article 366 (25) defined scheduled tribes as "such tribes and tribal communities or parts of, or groups within such tribes or tribal communities as are deemed under article 342 to be Scheduled Tribes for the purposes of this constitution. Several provisions have been incorporated in the constitution on for safeguarding and promoting the interest to rights of scheduled tribes in various sphere so as to enable them to join the national mainstream that too in all fields such as education, economic, public, employment related safeguards etc. The Scheduled Tribe population embodies one of the most economically penurious and marginalized groups in India. There are over 500 tribes as notified under article 342 of the Constitution of India, spread over different States and Union Territories of the country, the largest number of tribal communities being in the State of Odisha. Although Scheduled Tribes are a minority, they constitute about 8.2 %

of the total population in India. About 93% of the tribal people live in rural areas and are engaged in agricultural pursuits. A tribe is a traditional social group of people who follow their own customs and traditions. Tribal students are the one with least exposure to the world but with a maximum support of their family and a healthy open environment to live on (Khan, 2018).

Scheduled Tribe community is the most deprived community with respect to education in the country. The trend of literacy of tribes in India from 1961 to 2011 is shown in table 1.1. The percentage of literacy rate was only 8.54 % in 1961 which has increased to 47.10 % in 2001 and 63.1% in 2011 which is far below the general literacy rate of 72.19%. The female literacy rate was only 3.16% in 1961 which has increased to 54.4% in 2011. The mal literacy had stood up to 63.1% in 2011 from 8.54% in 1961.

Table 1.1 Literacy Trends for Scheduled Tribes from 1961 to 2011(In Percent)

Year	Male	Female	Total
1961	13.83	3.16	8.54
1971	17.63	4.85	11.39
1981	24.52	8.05	16.35
1991	40.65	19.19	29.60
2001	59.17	34.76	47.10
2011	71.70	54.4	63.1

Source, Census Report, 2011

Need and Significance of the Study

Today, education is the hope and dream of every person. Education has to prepare man to face the unknown unpredictable and uncertain tomorrow. In modern age, society

cannot achieve a gold without education. Education seeks to nurture ethical development inculcating the values, attitudes and skills required for living in harmony with one self and with others

including nature (NCF, 2005). The main aim of education is to modify the behaviour of students according to their needs and expectations of the society to enhance and satisfy the needs and problems faced by the students. Many educational policies, schemes and programmes are provided by the state and central ministries. Tribal community in India constitutes small portion of the total population in India. Nowadays they are able to relish the fruits of modernisation and technology development. Only with the help of education policies, they can empower themselves and build confidence and get courage to overcome the barriers of the day to day life. NEP (2020) states that several programmatic interventions to uplift children from tribal communities are currently in place; special mechanisms need to be made sure that children belonging to Tribal communities receive the benefit of these interventions.

Objective and Methodology

The present study aims to analyse and discuss the educational provisions especially the infrastructural facilities provided by the Model Residential schools in Kerala. The researcher selected two schools randomly ie Model Residential School, Njaraneeli and Model Residential School Pookkode for the micro level analysis. Since the study is mainly qualitative in nature, the investigator used participatory approach to understand and assess the performance of Special School in imparting quality education to the tribals. As the part of the study the investigator had spent one day in each Schools and closely observed the daily

routine, infrastructure facilities, learning environment, involvement of the students in the learning activities, teacher student relationships, extra-curricular activities, hostel facilities in order to get a better perception regarding the functions of MRS and its impact on educational performance of tribal students. In addition to this the investigator used a performance assessment scale to quantify the assessment done through the participatory approach. The investigator also conducted a comprehensive objective type test based on CBSE secondary level syllabus to understand the level of scholastic attainment of the tribal students. To understand the general perception of the students about the Residential school, a structured questionnaire was administrated among the selected sample of 50 tribal students from Model Residential School, Pookkode and Njaraneeli. The investigator used a check list to check the availability of infrastructure facilities of the selected residential School and the Hostel. The discussions and informal interview of officials of Tribal Development Department, Teaching and Non-Teaching staff of MRS, helped the investigator to understand more about the performance of Special School Intervention for the elevation of the educational pursuits of the tribal students.

Review of Literature

Vinoba Gautam (2003) made a detailed study on the issue of medium of instruction and the education of tribal children in India. The author opines that the text book of the tribal children must be in their local dialect,

especially in the primary level of education. Jyotsna Jha and Dhir Jhingran, (2005) conducted a study in accessing the schooling pattern of Scheduled Tribe children in 20 selected villages in North India. The study reveals that the then status of schooling participation among the ST children is worse than that among the Dalits children. Sedwal and Kamat, (2008) shed light on the nature of exclusion and discrimination faced by scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Study revealed that the concept of “Ashram schools” and “Residential schools” for ST children came into vogue in order to overcome structural barriers such as difficult terrain, inaccessible locations and spatially dispersed habitations and thereby to improve educational access for ST communities.

Education and Special Schools for Tribes

NEP (2020) aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education at all levels of school education and higher education including access to education. The NEP (2020) reaffirms that bridging the social category gaps in access, participation and learning outcomes in both school and higher education will continue to be one of the major goals of all education sector development programmes. The start of model residential schools and Ekalavya residential schools was a good step up for the upliftment of schedule tribe students. In the year 1990-1991, the school was initially started in Nalloornad (for boys) and Kattela (for girls). Currently, 20 schools including 2 CBSE schools are functioning under this scheme which includes 5 Ashram schools

and two Ekalavya Model Residential schools. These schools are mainly established to tackle the socio-economic inequalities and to impart quality education which help them to develop a harmonious mental health and academic performance. All government programmes and provisions emphasize to ensure respect for the right and protection from harm of students and ensures good mental health. Mental health commutates those behaviour, perceptions and feelings that determine a person's overall level of personal effectiveness, success, happiness and excellence of functioning as a person. Having a good mental health condition can make an easiness to work, keep up with the school, stick to a regular schedule, have healthy relationships, maintain hygiene and more. Good health, that includes both physical and mental attributes which is crucial to learn new skills, communication ability and social ability as well as to enhance the overall quality of life. Some research finding indicates that children who receive good mental health support do better academics, are flexible and adaptive to change. The overall mental health determines the learning. Problems in doing activities and behaviour can be addressed by providing mental health support. Access to educational provisions tackle the mental health status of tribal students by improving and handling the behavioural, emotional and overall development. The review of related literature on mental health status reveals that this is an exciting and promising area of research. Various studies have been conducted on Mental Health Status related to social maturity, frustration, adjustment, sex education etc. Man's destiny relies on

his physical and good mental health. All these aspects of mental health play a major role in the life of child's emotional equilibrium.

A good academic performance of students is of paramount importance in every educational system. It is the student's performance in any test or exam in the class. It provides prompt to an individual to achieve his goal. Educators and researches have long been interested in exploring variables contributing to the quality of academic performance. Learner's academic performance is affected by many factors including parents, social economic status, teachers' knowledge of the subject, availability and accessibility of resources, meals provision etc. (Malik & Singh, 2016) investigated the factors influencing students' academic performance. The study revealed that there is a positive and significant impact of learning facilities, communication skills, proper guidance from parents, school facilities and provisions from government on academic performance. Most research work dealt with the relationship between home environment and academic performance, peer group influence and academic performance and so on. They are hardly a few studies dealing with the prospects of the Model Residential Schools for the tribal children in Kerala. The investigator got a first-hand experience visiting the tribal schools and talking with a few teachers and children. In this context some research questions cropped up in the mind of the investigator are:

1. Does the education provisions meet the needs of model residential school students in Kerala?
2. Does the Mental health status of the model residential school students depends on the educational provisions?
3. Does proper utilization of the educational provisions help the model residential school students to attain high academic performance?
4. Does the children, teachers and parents have a proper awareness on the major educational provisions?

Analysis and Discussion

For enhancing school education among tribes the government started a number of schools focusing tribes such as Model Residential Schools, Ashram Schools, Tribal schools etc. The concept of Ashram School is based on the Gandhian philosophy of self-reliance and practice started with an experiment by Thakkar Bupa, a Gandhian, in Panchmahal district in Gujarat during pre-independence days (Jha and Jhingran, 2005). Ashram School is a centrally-sponsored scheme initiated by Government of India which is residential in nature, built to serve the tribal students from various clusters by providing free board and lodging. Many reasons are there to start such schools: first, the difficulty of establishing primary schools in tribal hamlets is due to the existence of rigid conventional norms. Second, it is aimed at creating a congenial atmosphere for learning/teaching as majority of the tribal households lack such an environment. Third, the policy is aimed to develop the total personality of children by imparting

vocational skills in order to help them with better occupational and employment opportunities (Sujatha, 2002). The core objective of Model Residential School (MRS) is to give high quality education to the bright young students belonging to tribal communities. The functioning of the school will be in accordance with the public school which is good indeed for the tribal students who face the problem of great inaccessibility to such a kind of quality education. At present, there are 22 MRS/Ashram Schools functioning under the Scheduled Tribe Development Department. Among this, four schools located at Mancherry (Malappuram), Noolpuzha (Wayanad), Thirunelli (Wayanad) and Malambhuzha (Palakkad) are specifically meant for Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs). All these schools are functioning under the control of Kerala Scheduled Caste/ Scheduled Tribe Educational Society.

Dr Ambedhkar Vidhyanikethan CBSE Model Residential School at Njaraneeli is in Thiruvanthapuram district for tribal students and its following the CBSE syllabus. Model Residential school Pookkode is at Wayanad district and the school is having state syllabus. Both these schools are aiming to impart high quality education along with training to bring them to be good, morally straight and productive citizens. MRS Njaraneeli has better basic infrastructure facilities when compare with MRS Pookkode. Being an English medium school, MRS Njaraneeli got special consideration in terms of financial allocation as well. It may be the reason for the better infrastructure in this school (Planning Board, 2021). Class

infrastructure facilities at School comprises of facilities like individual sitting facilities and storage facilities like, Availability of individual sitting facilities, Facility of almirah or shelf, writing boards, lightning facilities and fan, Proper ventilation, Classroom announcement facility, Availability of other furniture etc. All these facilities are well provided in both MRS Njaraneeli and MRS Pookkode except almirah and classroom announcement facilities.

“Academic infrastructure recognizes the importance of a good library, spacious classrooms, a large playground, well equipped laboratories and the positive reinforcement that can be given with the use of modern technological aids like the computer and audio- visual equipment” (Planning Board Report, 2021). The high school classrooms are converted into smart classrooms with ICT facilities as per government’s new initiative. It is to be noted that those schools with ICT facilities, science and computer laboratory and Sasthraposhini laboratory and make use of it effectively and perform better. All these academic facilities are provided in MRS Njaraneeli. MRS Pookkode lacks adequate ICT facilities and adequate facilities in the library. Students lack reading space in the library, as they have carry the reading books to either class or hostels to read.

In addition to the academic infrastructural facilities, co-curricular facilities for student development at school are very essential for the all-round development of the students. Playground facilities, availability of multi-

purpose court, availability of essential sports equipment, availability of store room facilities, dressing room, availability of school radio, stage facility, availability of open halls, facilities for conducting assembly

and news reading hall etc are included in co-curricular facilities. MRS Njaraneeli exhibits best co-curricular facilities compared with MRS Pookkode.

Table 1.2 Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
VAR00001	50	3.00	5.00	4.3000	0.78895
VAR00002	50	3.00	5.00	4.5600	0.73290
VAR00003	50	5.00	5.00	5.0000	0.00000
VAR00004	50	3.00	5.00	4.0000	1.01015
VAR00005	50	4.00	5.00	4.7800	0.41845
Valid N (listwise)	50				

Source: Field Survey

Perfections in the institutional infrastructure ensure growth in school enrolment which is of prime importance to tribal education. Proper infrastructure at school facilitates learning and development and lessens barriers to education. Inadequate schools, lack of teachers, teacher absenteeism materialize as the common issue in tribal areas. It is essential to identify the infrastructure facilities. Table 1.2 shows the descriptive statistics analysis of the school infrastructure using Likert Scale, classified the infrastructure facilities in the school broadly into five variables viz academic facilities, co-curricular, drinking water, sanitation and hostel food. The mean score of all the variables are above four nearing to five which indicates that majority of the respondents feel that the facilities are

above average level in the school and they are satisfied.

Conclusion and Suggestions

Model Residential Schools definitely uplifts the poor & deprived tribal children as tribal children are very poor and their parents cannot afford to send their children to private unaided school. Sending their children to private unaided school is a matter of economic burden for them which may dislocate their traditional pattern of division of labour too. Proper educational policies are very essential to impart education among the tribes of India. Policies developed by the Indian government soon after the Indian independence was not given enough emphasis for improving the educational deprivation of tribes. But now

the focus has been fixed in uplifting the educational attainments of the tribal community and to break the shell of deprivation among them. Opening up of Model Residential School in TSP areas was an important step put forward by this policy. Currently, there are 22 MRS and Ashram school functioning in different parts of the

State aimed at giving quality residential education for tribal students. But here it is very essential to address that only 2.5% to 3 % of the tribal students in the state can be accommodated. In order to accommodate the rest of the population, broad inclusive policies have to be implemented.

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