The Academic Achievement of Tribal Students of Ashram Schools of Surat District

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Abstract

In Indian education system education has limited connotation. It is largely concerned with the existing formal structures of education and the insitutionlised methodology of imparting knowledge to individuals. Within this very system exist many sub-groups of individuals with specific needs and tribals are one of them. Education of tribals is an important task before the government of India. One special education input for tribal education is residential schools widely known as Ashram schools in India. These institutions are very special efforts in the direction of tribal education. The study of existing status of education in ashram schools will provide empirical base line about the status of tribal education. Such data also facilitate evaluation of tribal education programmes undertaken. From this point of view it would be worthwhile to know about he academic achivement of tribal students in the ashram schools. The academic achievement of tribal students of Ashram Schools of Surat district was found average in Gujarati, Hindi, Social Science and Mathematics while below average in English and Science and Technology. So there was a need to find out the reasons behind their different levels of achievement in different subjects. The paper shows condition and quality of inputs and the functioning of schools with large ST population is not very encouraging. And there is need to improve the quality of education in ashram schools.

Introduction

Education is a process, a long drawn out one, indeed a life long process. It has long been recognised as one of the corner stones of social and economic development. More recently with technological development and the changes in the methods of production, it has become even more important because the new technologies and

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production methods depend upon the human resource that is well-trained and intellectually flexible. More than ever before, the development of nation today hinges on its capacity to acquire, adapt and then to advance knowledge. This capacity depends largely upon the extent to which the country's population has attained literacy, numeracy, communication and problem solving skills.

In Indian education system education has limited connotation. It is largely concerned with the existing formal structure of education and the institutionalised methodology of imparting knowledge to individuals. Within this very system exist many sub-groups of individuals with specific needs and tribals are one of them. In fact, tribals form a large group of individuals in Indian society. For several historical, economic and social reasons the scheduled groups have remained economically backward and socially retarded even to this day. This is true with respect to their educational levels also. India has the second largest tribal population in the world. This ST population is 8 per cent of the total population of India and about 10 per cent of all rural people. Twenty two of the twenty-six States of the country have about 90per cent of the ST 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 (Indian Education Report, 2002).

Meaning of Tribals

The term tribe or tribal is not defined any where in the Constitution although according to the Article 342, STs represents the tribe or tribal communities that are notified by the President. Tribes are not part of the traditional Hindu caste structure. STs in India are more like the "indigenous" or "native people" in other parts of the world.

Our Constitution and the Tribals

The Constitution has devoted more than 20 articles on the redressal and upliftment of underpriviledge following the policy of positive discrimination and affirmative action, particularly with reference to the STs. Recognising the special needs of STs the Constitution of India made certain special safeguards to protect these communities from all the possible exploitation and thus ensure social justice. While Article 14 confers equal rights and opportunities to all, Article 15 prohibits discrimination against any citizen on the grounds of sex, religion, race, caste etc; Article 15(4) enjoins upon the State to make special provisions for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes; Article 16(4) empowers the State to make provisions for reservation in appointments or posts in favour of any backward class of citizens, which in the opinion of State, is not adequately represented in the services under the State; Article 46 enjoins upon the State to promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people and, in particular, the STs and promises to protect them from social injustice and all form of exploitation. Further, while Article

275 promises grant-in-aid for promoting the welfare of STs and for raising the level of administration of Scheduled areas, Article 330, 332 and 335 stipulates reservation of seats for STs in the Lok Sabha and in the State Legislative Assemblies and in services. Finally, the constitution also empowers the state to appoint a commission to investigate the conditions of socially and educationally backward classes (Article 340) and to specify those Tribes or Tribal Communities deemed to be as STs (Article 342).

Education of tribals is an important task before the Government of India. Article 46 of the Constitution mention about promotion of educational and economic interests for Schedule Castes, Schedule Tribes and other weaker sections. To quote "The State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people and in particular of SCs and STs and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitations." Many more other constitutional rights were available for tribal people.

Ashram Schools

One special educational input for tribal education is residential schools widely known as Ashram schools in India. These institutions are very special efforts in the direction of tribal education. Planning for education of children coming from tribal communities is not a simple task. Though the entire educational programme for tribal children is looked after by the education department yet a comprehensive picture is hardly available. There are many activities related with education of tribal children which are managed by other departments. For example, almost in all the States primary institutions catering to the needs of children from tribal communities is looked after by the education department while ashram schools are the responsibilities of Tribal Welfare Departments and pre-primary education of voluntary agencies or Social Welfare Departments. Besides planning for ancillary services like scholarships, stipends, hostel, free book aid, mid-day meal, etc., are done at the State level. Therefore, a clear picture of all the inputs in the form of interventions for education of tribal children may not be available for a given geographical area. Yet to plan for education of tribal children it is necessary to study the linkages between different schemes. It is sad to note that the scheme, once approved, is left to operate independently and no study is conducted to assess the effectiveness of such scheme. This sometimes results in duplication and wastage in terms of efforts and inputs.

While planning for education in tribal areas, attention has been paid to provide extra facilities in the form of various inputs for education of tribal children with a view to reducing existing disparities in educational access thus influencing retention and achievement of tribal children. The high dropout rate in general and that of tribal children in particular has to be tackled through attractive schemes beneficial for them. There are indirect evidences available of their positive impact on education of ST children. In case of States where ashram schools are functional the drop out rate

has been reported as nil or very low. A separate study of the achievement of the children staying in ashram schools could be taken up specially in the context of time spent in the school and compare it with the achievement of tribal children studying in other schools.

There is one interesting trend to note which relates to opening of educational institutions in various areas. Since there is pressure on higher enrolment in 6-14 age groups and also on higher institutions like higher secondary schools, the number of such institutions is much higher as compared to the number of middle schools. Therefore, the relatively advance areas with higher number of primary schools have reduced outlays for this sector while backward areas have more outlays for primary education.

Hostel facilities provided for tribal children away from their families is usually perceived as an additional stipend and not as something supporting education of children.

Another important provision in the form of merit-scholarships, stipends and other attendance scholarships, also suffers from the lacuna of planning. In case of most of the States, attendance scholarships are available to all boys and girls coming from tribal communities. This provision has been there for quite sometime. Some communities have taken full advantage of these facilities and come up to a considerable extent while others remain at the same level. Most of the States have generalised these benefits which have resulted in higher commitment on the part of the State. The second alternative could be evolving ways to develop methodology to give a major share of these benefits to the backwards of this tribal population. Even if these benefits at various levels of education are analysed, as expected, the trend is more in favour of primary level education.

Some States have also developed instructional materials in tribal dialects for children coming from these tribal communities. The Constitution itself provides that every child be given facility of instructions through their mother tongue. But most of the States are still in the process of doing so. The problem of development of instructional materials in tribal dialects becomes graver in cases where there is more than one major tribe. Instructional materials which reflect their culture and tradition are the need of the time.

Another special educational input for tribal education is residential schools widely known as ashram schools in India. Since such institutions are very special efforts in the direction of tribal education, it is generally believed that there are significant, attempts in the direction of higher enrolment of tribal children belonging to school going age group. A number of studies have also been conducted to study the profile of such schools. Have these institutions, which are supposed to be nodal institutions, really had positive impact on enrolment, retention and achievement of such children is to be studied in order to ascertain their specific contribution towards tribal education.

Rationale of the study

Research in the area of tribal education has many vital and useful findings to

report but the findings pertaining to the participation of tribal people in the school education programme have not been conclusive. It is a fact that tribal people are logging behind in the sphere of education compare to other advanced sections of the population. This phenomenon has been witnessed by all of us both in the pre-independence and post-independent India. Even now also education has not penetrated deep into the tribal life. Such a situation raises two pertinent questions. One, how far the tribal people have come forward and benefited from the prevailing education system? Second, what are major stumbling blocks coming in their way? Whole while the response to the previous question can be given through large scale survey type studies (macro level studies), response to the latter can be given be micro level in-depth study. Thus in the contact of tribal education both the types of studies are essential. The macro level studies will provide valuable inputs for policy planning; micro level studies will be helpful in providing the needed educational inputs in the local specific context.

Existence of very few studies in tribal education in Indian context bring to the forefront the need for conducting studies on tribal education in India, on any of its dimension. It has been found that the infrastructure in the Ashram schools in terms of buildings, teaching aids, hostel facilities etc. were found to be poor. The teaching learning process in these schools was not found to be satisfactory. Absenteeism, stagnation and wastage were high in the ashram schools. Ashram schools had perceptible impact on local communities. They had many positive effects. However, some negative effects were also seen (Raman, 1990). Thus, there is need to conduct studies to explore the empirical basis of tribal education in its different aspects.

A study of existing status will provide empirical base line about the status of tribal education. Such data also facilitate evaluation of tribal education programmes undertaken. From this point of view it would be worth while to know about the academic achievement of tribal students in the ashram schools. Also existence of such type of studies in primary education among tribals in Indian context will facilitate planners to design appropriate policies for the improvement of education among the tribal people.

Thus, an analysis in to students academic achievement yield significant insight into the current situations of tribal education in ashram schools. It may give guidelines for curriculum renewal/ development in education pertaining to tribals for making it more thorough, realistic and practical.

Thus, a need has been arise for investigating the academic achievement of tribal students in ashram school education in Indian context.

Statement of the Problem

To study the academic achievement of Tribal students of Ashram schools of Surat district

Objectives of the study

1. To study the academic achievement of tribal students in all the subjects

in terms of Girls, Boys and Total Students (Girls + Boys).

2. To study the relationship between different subjects.

Academic achievement: Marks obtained by students in Class X Board examination of the academic year 2006-2007.

Delimitation of the study

The study is confined to all the Class X students of Ashram schools of Surat District. Which are following Gujarat Secondary Education Board syllabus of 2006-2007 academic years?

Population

All the students of Standard X studying in all the Ashram schools of Surat District following Gujarat State Education Board syllabus constitute the population. The students were of the academic year 2006-2007.

Sample

The sample has been selected using 'Random Lottery Method'. From all the ashram schools three schools were randomly selected. From these three schools, all the students of Class X were selected as sample of the study. The sample size was 221 (72 boys+ 149 girls) students of Class X studying in Amalsadi ashram School, Ambapardi ashram school and Vaghecha ashram school of Surat District.

Tools

Documents of results of Class X students.

Collection of data

For the purpose of collecting data for the study, investigator had personally gone to schools constituting the sample. The investigator had personally approached the principals of the schools and explained the purpose of the study. The investigator had personally collected the documents of results of standard X students of sampled schools.

Analysis of the data

The data were analysed using mean, median, mode, standard deviation, standard error of mean, quartile deviation, skewness and kurtosis. The data for objective two was analysed by applying Pearson Product–Moment correlation. The coefficient of correlation is a single value that tells about the extent to which two things are related and to what extent variation in one go with the variation in other.

Major Findings and Conclusion

(1) The mean achievement of girls in Gujarati was found to be 51.7out of the total of 100. The nature of distribution of scores of the entire sample was peaked than the normal i.e. leptokurtic. The fifty per cent of the girls had scored 52 or more marks in Gujarati. Moreover, 10 per cent of the girls had scored 64 or more than it.

(2) The mean achievement of boys in Gujarati was found to be 54.2 out of the total of 100. The nature of distribution of scores of the entire sample was peaked than the normal i.e. platykurtic. The fifty percent of the boys had scored 54 or more marks in Gujarati. Moreover, 10 per cent of the boys had scored 67 or more than it.

(3) The mean achievement of total students in Gujarati was found to be

52.5 out of the total of 100. The nature of distribution of scores of the entire sample was peaked than the normal i.e. leptokurtic. The fifty percent of the total students had scored 52 or more marks in Gujarati. Moreover, 10 per cent of the total students had scored 66 or more than it.

(4) The mean achievement of girls in English was found to be 37.5 out of the total of 100. The nature of distribution of scores of the entire sample was peaked than the normal i.e. leptokurtic. The fifty percent of the girls had scored 37 or more marks in English. Moreover, 10 per cent of the girls had scored 52 or more than it.

(5) The mean achievement of boys in English was found to be 46.5 out of the total of 100. The nature of distribution of scores of the entire sample was peaked than the normal i.e. leptokurtic. The fifty per cent of the boys had scored 46 or more marks in English. Moreover, 10 per cent of the boys had scored 59 or more than it.

(6) The mean achievement of total students in English was found to be 40.5 out of the total of 100. The nature of distribution of scores of the entire sample was peaked than the normal i.e. leptokurtic. The fifty per cent of the total students had scored 41 or more marks in English. Moreover, 10 per cent of the total students had scored 55 or more than it.

(7) The mean achievement of girls in Hindi was found to be 63.6 out of the total of 100. The nature of distribution of scores of the entire sample was peaked than the normal i.e. platykurtic. The fifty per cent of the girls had scored 65 or more marks in Hindi. Moreover, 10 per cent of the girls had scored 76 or more than it.

(8) The mean achievement of boys in Hindi was found to be 66.9out of the total of 100. The nature of distribution of scores of the entire sample was peaked than the normal i.e. platykurtic. The fifty per cent of the boys had scored 67 or more marks in Hindi. Moreover, 10 per cent of the boys had scored 77 or more than it.

(9) The mean achievement of total students in Hindi was found to be 64.7 out of the total of 100. The nature of distribution of scores of the entire sample was peaked than the normal i.e. platykurtic. The fifty per cent of the total students had scored 66 or more marks in Hindi. Moreover, 10 per cent of the total students had scored 77 or more than it.

(10) The mean achievement of girls in Social Science was found to be 53.2out of the total of 100. The nature of distribution of scores of the entire sample was peaked than the normal i.e. platykurtic. The fifty per cent of the girls had scored 55 or more marks in Social Science. Moreover, 10 per cent of the girls had scored 69 or more than it.

(11) The mean achievement of boys in Social Science was found to be 60.8 out of the total of 100. The nature of distribution of scores of the entire sample was peaked than the

normal i.e. platykurtic. The fifty per cent of the boys had scored 61 or more marks in Social Science. Moreover, 10 per cent of the boys had scored 72 or more than it.

(12) The mean achievement of total students in Social Science was found to be 55.7 out of the total of 100. The nature of distribution of scores of the entire sample was peaked than the normal i.e. platykurtic. The fifty per cent of the total students had scored 57 or more marks in Social Science. Moreover, 10 per cent of the total students had scored 71 or more than it.

(13) The mean achievement of girls in Science and Technology was found to be 42.7 out of the total of 100. The nature of distribution of scores of the entire sample was peaked than the normal i.e. platykurtic. The fifty per cent of the girls had scored 44 or more marks in Science and Technology. Moreover, 10 per cent of the girls had scored 63 or more than it.

(14) The mean achievement of Boys in Science and Technology was found to be 59.1 out of the total of 100. The nature of distribution of scores of the entire sample was peaked than the normal i.e. leptokurtic. The fifty per cent of the boys had scored 58 or more marks in Science and Technology. Moreover, 10 per cent of the boys had scored 72 or more than it.

(15) The mean achievement of total students in Science and Technology was found to be 48.1 out of the total of 100. The nature of distribution of scores of the entire sample was peaked than the normal i.e. platykurtic. The fifty per cent of the total students had scored 50 or more marks in Science and Technology. Moreover, 10 per cent of the total students had scored 67 or more than it.

(16) The mean achievement of girls in Mathematics was found to be 42.6 out of the total of 100. The nature of distribution of scores of the entire sample was peaked than the normal i.e. leptokurtic. The fifty per cent of the girls had scored 41 or more marks in Mathematics. Moreover, 10 per cent of the girls had scored 72 or more than it.

(17) The mean achievement of boys in Mathematics was found to be 62.7out of the total of 100. The nature of distribution of scores of the entire sample was peaked than the normal i.e. platykurtic. The fifty per cent of the boys had scored 64 or more marks in Mathematics. Moreover, 10 per cent of the boys had scored 75 or more than it.

(18) The mean achievement of total students in Mathematics was found to be 49.1 out of the total of 100. The nature of distribution of scores of the entire sample was peaked than the normal i.e. platykurtic. The fifty per cent of the total students had scored 54 or more marks in Mathematics. Moreover, 10 per cent of the total students had scored 73 or more than it.

(19) The mean achievement of girls in Krushi Vigyan was found to be 80.4out of the total of 100. The

nature of distribution of scores of the entire sample was peaked than the normal i.e. platykurtic. The fifty per cent of the girls had scored 81 or more marks in *Krushi Vigyan*. Moreover, 10 per cent of the girls had scored 87 or more than it.

(20) The mean achievement of Boys in *Krushi Vigyan* was found to be 81.7out of the total of 100. The nature of distribution of scores of the entire sample was peaked than the normal i.e. platykurtic. The fifty per cent of the boys had scored 82 or more marks in Krushi Vigyan. Moreover, 10 per cent of the boys had scored 87 or more than it.

(21) The mean achievement of total students in *Krushi Vigyan* was found to be 80.78 out of the total of 100. The nature of distribution of scores of the entire sample was peaked than the normal i.e. platykurtic. The fifty per cent of the total students had scored 81 or more marks in *Krushi Vigyan*. Moreover, 10 per cent of the total students had scored 87 or more than it.

(22) There is moderate positive correlation ranging from 0.35089 to 0.670243 between scores of mathematics and Gujarati, Hindi, English, Social Science, Science and Technology and *Krushi Vigyan* scores of the students.

Discussion

The academic achievement of tribal students was found average in Gujarati, Hindi, Social Science and Mathematics while below average in English and Science and Technology. The academic achievement in Krushi Vigyan was good. So there was a need to find out the reasons behind their different levels of achievement in different subjects. This shows that the condition and quality of inputs and the functioning of schools with large ST population are not very encouraging. Most of such schools practically remain single teacher schools because the unwilling teachers who are either punished by being transferred to tribal areas or are forced to work in tribal areas as a part of the policy are usually absent from the school. The quality of teaching- learning materials in the school is also of a low quality. The Twenty-eighth report of the Commission of SC/ST found that a number of schools situated in tribal areas remained closed for certain periods of time and in a number of cases these schools had not functioned since the beginning of the academic year. To retain these teachers in the tribal areas more interventions in the form of facilities and provision of quarters for non-local teachers have to be planned.

The two studies conducted on ashram schools by Desai, B. and Patel, A. (1981) and Pratap, D.R., Raju, C.C. and Rao, M.V.M. (1971) do not project a good profile of ashram schools. Pratap, D.R. and Raju, C.C. (1973) found the working and physical conditions of ashram schools unsatisfactory. Some of the teachers working in these schools did not stay there and visited schools occasionally. The study pointed out that the schools were treated as source of income rather than avenues of service. Desai, B. and Patel, A. (1981) found that in most of the ashram

schools the number of children enrolled was much higher than the prescribed number (120 students each) and except in two schools, the 1:1 ratio among boys and girls was not maintained. Only 18 out of 22 ashram schools had 100 per cent teacher strength and in some cases the educational qualifications of teachers was Class VII. The overall wastage rate reported in these ashram schools was 44.42 per cent. Masavi, M. (1976) in his study found the wastage rate to be 65 per cent at the primary level, however, only 9.1 per cent of the total enrolled children of Class I could complete Class IV. The stagnation rate at Class I was very high which came down considerably for Classes II, III and IV. The overall wastage in ashram schools was 46.7 per cent. The main causes for wastage and stagnation were found to be socio-economic conditions, ignorance among tribal parents, ill equipped teachers, teaching in alien languages, physical illness inappropriate curricula.

The study by Joshi, S.D. (1980) besides other things, found that the majority of teachers did not have a specialised training for working in backward areas.

Srivastava, R. C. (1981) in his study found that unproductive and traditional type of educational system for the tribals was the cause of indifferent attitude of tribal parents towards their children's education. Besides, lack of necessary facilities and equipments for teaching was the cause of lack of motivation for education among the tribals.

In an evaluative study conducted on hostels and Ashrams for Tribal Girl students, Jha, P. (1985) found that like most of other beneficiary schemes meant for tribals, mostly the rich amongst the tribal community availed of the facilities of hostels and Ashrams. The number of students admitted to the hostels was much higher than the number expected and the superintendents of these hostels were neither trained nor qualified. The hostel rooms were overcrowded and did not have basic facilities. The scholarship given to girls was sometimes misappropriated by their parents making their girls living very difficult. The amount of this scholarship was also found to be inadequate. In a contemporary study conducted by Sharma, R.C. (1984) it was found that introduction of-different incentives like free uniforms, textbooks and boarding and lodging facilities resulted in higher enrolment of SC and ST students including girls. This increase in case of SC and ST children ranged from 49.2 per cent to 92.7 per cent.

There is one more important aspect of these facilities which has been mentioned in the report of the study "Scheduled Castes and Tribes-A SocioEconomic Survey" by Parvathamma, C; (1984). She says that nearly one half of the samples are not aware of the Constitutional provisions meant for the development of the downtrodden. At the same time even those with such knowledge have not availed them as expected. The reasons for not availing these benefits are very many. To quote "According to the people in the study, officials in the administration are apathetic and are not sincere in implementing the provisions. The SCs and STs are critical of their so-

called leaders who according to them are selfish. They are of the opinion that the educated urban based SC and ST elites have used the new opportunity for themselves in narrow circle and thus made the entire provisions a family issue ... only certain families coming from particular subcastes are taking away the lion's share leaving the rest of the deserving SCs and STs where they are."

A study conducted by Ekka, E. M. (1990) on Development of Tribal Education in Orissa after Independence showed that percentage of bigger habitations in the tribal inhabited areas is very negligible. This leads us to conclude in any State with high tribal population, that educational interventions should be planned at the level of various habitations big or small. Another study conducted by Biswal, G. C. (1991) in Orissa found that as compared to boys, fewer girls in the area got enrolled in the schools. As far as quality of teachers working in these schools is concerned, most of the teachers were found to be non-tribal and less qualified. Very surprisingly the study found that the drop out rate at the higher level is higher than that at the lower level.

Two studies, one by Bhargava, S.M. (1989) and another by Kamble, P.R. (1992) were carried out to conduct survey of educational facilities for weaker sections in Orissa and Maharashtra respectively. The study by Bhargava (1989) found that educational facilities for Scheduled Tribe habitations are poorer in comparison to other habitations in the district and the facilities of textbooks, free uniforms, stipends and mid-day meals were available to children coming from tribal communities. Kamble (1992) found that in the opinion of Headmasters 74 per cent students take the advantage of facilities available for tribal children, viz., free textbooks, uniforms, writing materials and nutritious meal and 84 per cent of such students are regular in their attendance. One very significant finding of the study was that the Headmasters opined that the government facilities are useful to arrest wastage in education but they are not useful to increase the "percentage of pass" students. The drop out rate (for Devgad taluka) was much lower than the national drop out rate.

This depict very discouraging picture of education among tribal children in ashram schools and therefore there is need to improve the quality of education in ashram schools.

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