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A Contemporary Study: the Problems and Issues of Education of Tribal Children in Kandhamal district of Orissa

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ABSTRACT

The growth and decline of education in the tribal dominated Kandhamal district of Odisha is the major concern in the development and strategy of education in the state. The district of Kandhamal, formally known as Phulbani is a centrally located district of Odisha. The district is mainly dominated by scheduled tribe and scheduled caste population. Scheduled tribe population includes tribes like Kandha, Kutia Kandha, Kandhgouda, Kol, and Soura etc. Though the establishment of primary schools by Government and private agencies is quite noticeable in recent years, the problem of drop out is on increasing trend which has been explained below. The first and most important reason is the prevailing economic backwardness. We know that majority of the people in the district are poor and who spend most of their times in doing small jobs and marginal farming, where children are also taking part. Ignorance and poverty in Kandhamal district are major speed-breakers in the swift developing state and can be overcome easily through proper education and through motivational strategy. This research paper also highlights those social, economic, and cultural transits of Kandhamal and their problems of education and some activities act as barriers in their progress of education.

Keywords: Problems of Education, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Ignorance and poverty, Cultural Transits, Sustainability, Tribal groups, Christian Missionaries, Policy and Principles and so on.

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INTRODUCTION

The spread of education among the weaker sections of our society is vital as education is a prime requisite for socio-economic development. The policy to promote educational interests of the weaker sections of the people, especially the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, has been enshrined in our Constitution as Directive Principle of State Policy. The child learnt at home and at 'dormitories' and this training related to various activities of tribal life. But with the advent of Christian missionaries modern schools came up in tribal areas. The problems and issues identified at this juncture may seriously affect the future developments in the district. Hence, it is high time that appropriate strategies must be built up to find out ways and means not to subsidize but to mitigate the problems for the future.

While discussing growth of education in tribal dominated Kandhamal district and the declining trend in education we have to make a careful study in the grass root level. The district of Kandhamal, formally known as Phulbani is a centrally located district of Orissa, which is at a higher altitude of 1100 Meters. The district is mainly dominated by scheduled tribe and scheduled caste population. Scheduled tribe population includes tribes like Kandha, Kutia Kandha, Kandhgouda, Kol, and Soura etc. and scheduled castes include mainly *panas*. Taking the majority of the population as Kandhas the district has renamed as Kandhamal in 1994 instead of Phulbani. As per Census figures of 2001, the total population of Kandhamal district is 6,48,201, out of which Scheduled Tribe population is 3,36,809 (51.98%) and Scheduled Caste population is 1,09,506 (18.89%) of the total population.

After independence native Government attempted vigorously to educate all children within the age group of 6 to 14 years as per provision laid down in article 45 and 46 of the Indian Constitution. So time to time committees, commissions and working groups were set up by Government of India to suggest ways to attain the goal. Those committees, commissions and, working groups recommended their well-thought, valuable suggestions for all-round development of education including Tribal and Backward classes. The Government of Orissa also organized workshops, seminars, survey and evaluation teams to find out faults

and remedies for development of education from time to time, these also helped a lot to eliminate the lacuna and faults pointed out in those reports and to guide properly. Instead of several attempts taken since preindependence, it is a great regret that after 57, years of independence, India could not achieve her 100 % literacy in Orissa, the poverty stricken state yet attained 63.61% literacy till 2001. Tribal district of Orissa is far behind from the national and state literacy rate. So is the fate of Kandhamal also. The percentage of literacy of Kandhamal district could not compete with state average due to low-income level and backwardness of the people. This district having no industry at all and for which the main source of income of the people is cultivation and collection of forest products, the literacy rate of tribal people is unsatisfactory.

Though the establishment of primary schools by Government and private agencies is quite noticeable in recent years the problem of drop out is on increasing trend which has been explained below. The first and most important reason is the prevailing economic backwardness. We know that majority of the people in the district are poor and who spend most of their times in doing small jobs and marginal farming, where children are also taking part. So financial difficulties create major hindrances for them for sending their children for studies. Secondly, ignorance and superstitions play a major set back for spread of education in the district. People of the remote area are superstitious and addicted to blind beliefs. So they do not understand the value of education. Thirdly, a vital reason for the drop out problem of tribal students is their prevailing cultural process and life style, which hardly creates conducive environment for spreading of education. There are no specific Government sanctioned holidays for tribal of the state to be observed by the educational institution unlike other communities enjoy. Hence tribal students remain absent in the school during their festive occasions, when there is no holiday. For this reason tribal students are lagging behind in studies from their non-tribal counterparts.

The central focus is too given to their health, caste, class and community problem which caused major drawbacks in the primary education of the schools. The poverty of tribal people doesn't permit them to keep clean their home environment. They don't get nutritious food. So tribal children are often fall ill. The parents could not treat them timely due to economic scarcity. So they suffer for a long period. During suffering the child remains absent from school and after recovering from illness he loses his appetite for study.

However there are few other reasons, which may also be responsible for drop-out problem of tribal students in Kandhamal district.

1. The medium of teaching i.e., Oriya language is a foreign language for the tribal children.
2. Non-tribal teachers are posted to schools located at tribal areas, which are not aware of tribal cultural values.
3. Absence of tribal cultural and regional materials in class books.
4. The school environment does not attract the tribal students.
5. Some schools are not having their own buildings.
6. Schools having single teacher.
7. Teachers in interior pockets neglecting in duties.
8. Irregular supply of mid-day meals.
9. Lack of communication facility.
10. Untimely supply of study materials.

There are many other minor reasons for drop out of tribal students. If this type of process will continue and slow progress of literacy rate will prevail then the very purpose of fundamental right to education as per 86th amendment of Constitution will be defeated. The Constitution of India was introduced in 1950 and there was a pious aim to educate all children from the age group of 6 to 14 years by 1965. But it was failed. Government from time to time fixed a target year for achievement of 100% literacy. Again, the year 2000 was targeted to achieve the goal. It was also unsuccessful. About 40 years have already been elapsed since 1965, but the goal is not attained. We have to again wait for at least 150 years to get cent percent result if the progress of tribal education will continue at the present rate. But it is a good sign that District Primary Education Project assisted by the D.F.I.D. has been launched in Kandhamal district since the year 2000. A survey was conducted in the year 2000 to identify children from age group of 6 to 14 by the D.P.E.P. It reveals that there are 1,21,563 (boys-64655 and girls-56908) children are coming within the category, out of which 30916 (boys-15024 and girls-15992) are not admitted in to schools. There are no schools in 906 villages till 2003. Steps are being taken to set up schools and E.G.S. centers in D.P.E.P. programme. Accordingly 57 primary schools and 549 E.G.S. centres in the said programme are set up till end of 2003. Sarba Sikhya Abhiyana has also been introduced in the district from 15.08.2003. This programme will continue till 2010 while D.P.E.P. programme is going on.

If D.P.E.P. and *Sarba Sikhya Abhiyana* is working out whole-heartedly by every concerned it could be hoped that cent percent achievement could be achieved by 2012 in the field of education in Kandhamal District. To achieve the goal at a short span of time following recommendations may be adopted.

1. Study books must be prepared in tribal language up to upper primary level.
2. Teachers from the same tribe and from the nearby villages if possible from the same village should be appointed.
3. There must be a school in each village.
4. More M.E. schools should be opened in tribal areas.
5. Every school must be well-equipped with all study materials.
6. Tribal students must be supplied with study materials and dresses free of cost.
7. Pucca building must be provided to every school.
8. Teachers must be paid regularly with free accommodation facility in school campus.
9. Responsibility may be laid down to teachers for enrollment of all children from the age group of 6 to 14 years and not allow dropouts at any circumstances.
10. Each parent must be motivated to send their children above six years to school or teachers and parents may be legally bound to do this task.
11. All N.G.Os functioning in the district may be involved in the process to educate all children from 6 to 14 years.
12. Training at intervals to the Non-tribal teachers about the tribal culture and language should be provided. These suggestions may be introduced in a war footing manner and all concerned from parents, teachers to Heads of the district must work whole-heartedly to achieve cent percent education to all children from 6 to 14 years within a limited span of time and bring a sea change in their society to bring the tribal in to the mainstream.

Importance of the study

This proposed study tries to reveal the problems and drawbacks happening behind the tribal children of the Kandhamal districts of Orissa. It also measures the actions undertaken by public sector and the private sector of the state and evaluate the concerned education being made for the enhancement and development of their of child education. Though, education plays an important role in the progress of an individual's mind and country. Ignorance and poverty in Kandhamal district are major speed-breakers in the swift developing state and can be overcome easily through proper education and through motivational strategy. In the ongoing violence in Orissa, the unfortunate victims have been the students of educational institutions. With more and more of security forces being requisitioned, more and more of schools are being made use of to house the said forces. Educational institutions and teachers have been severely affected in Kandhamal district of Orissa owing to the ongoing communal violence. Violence erupted in Orissa in the aftermath of the assassination of VHP leader Swami Lakhnananda Saraswati. All educational institutions have remained closed for the past five weeks owing to the curfew imposed. Parents feel it is not safe anymore to let their children take up even home tuition. Often, the curfew is relaxed when normalcy returns but this is inadequate to pursue education. Another major problem is that the security personnel, who are part of the relief team, camp at the educational institutions. Therefore educational activities have been directly affected in the district.

Objectives

This research paper aims :-

1. To explore the awareness of the community children about the utility of education and bring out their participation in developing educational standard of the villages in the Kandhamal district.
2. To ensure total enrolment and full attendance of all school going children in the village based education centers in the district.
3. To look at the opportunities for the eligible children to use their potential to successfully complete the standard of primary education in Kandhamal districts.
4. To reveal the problems of tribal children for their lagging behind the education and dropout of primary education in the district.
5. To disclose the level of social inequality, religious disparity, caste and class conflict in the primary education of the district.
6. It highlights the role of Government and NGO's and their plan, policy and programme for the growth and development of primary education in Kandhamal district.
7. This exploration also strives to gather the education of tribal female child and their problems in the district and also this aims to reveal the different circumstances which affect education from its sacred objective.

METHODOLOGY

This study attempts on Qualitative methods of approaches to interviewing and Quantitative research of designing a questionnaire analysis and writing up. It intends to follow the sampling methods for survey research and the logic of the survey method. It prepares some questions for collection of data related to tribal children enrolments, dropouts and retention rates, availability of teachers and institutions, ratio of female to male enrolment, and correlation between the gender and socio inequality in enrolment and in teachers as well as educational institutions. By means of the response from this assessment and a review of available literature two sets of questionnaires will be prepared. Questionnaire-1 will focus at school level to know the demerits and weaknesses of the schools and educational policies, functioning of the schools etc. and Questionnaire-2 will survey to parents of children to know about their unwillingness to send their children to schools. Thus, the data obtained from primary and secondary sources and from official records can be compared further to draw the real problems of primary education in Kandhamal district of Orissa.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The book "Changing Tribal Life in British Orissa by K. Majumdar" traces the British Government's Policy towards the aboriginal people of Orissa, particularly the Kandhs, and the reaction it caused in the people. The British effort to "tame" the tribals by armed measures was followed by their effort to "civilise the savages" by education and widen the scope and scale of their acculturation with "civilised" people in the neighboring tracts. This caused a great change in tribal life, society and polity. Tribal reaction to this externally-induced change varied between stubborn resistance and grudging acquiescence, depending on the pace and extent of the change.

Majumdar also attempted on the policy of "civilising the savages" was later changed to the policy of conserving "tribalism", the Government realising the damage done to tribal tradition and psyche. The study of the British tribal policy is worthwhile because the main problem faced by the administrators then persists even today: the problem of how to improve tribal life without causing, as an inevitable outcome, progressive detribalisation; how to modernise tribal life without destroying in the process the distinctive features of tribal tradition and culture.

"Changing Tribal Life A Socio Philosophical Perspective" by Padmaja Sen describes about the conceptualizing the tribe, the contributors in this book discuss at length the significance of myth and rituals among the tribals, folk treatment system, dialectics of identity and assimilation, and socio-religion of the tribes.

Biswamoy Pati 'Resisting Domination: Peasants, Tribals, and the National Movement in Orissa, 1920-50' narrated about the national movements of Orissa and the role of Gandhiji in inspiring political spirit from the grass root level. The author also attempts to grasp the peculiar socio-economic features of Orissa keeping linkage with the political mobilization at different layers of society.

S. Venkataiah's "Modern tribal education" depicts that the Tribals are the aboriginal people constitute around 7 per cent of the population of the country. They are backward in all respects—hence the need of special modern education for them. Since tribals still profess their ancient religion and unique life pattern, special efforts are needed to educate them. The present book is devoted to the modern education of tribals. Undoubtedly, this will prove a veritable mine of information to academics, researchers, policy planners and administrators.

The book 'Bring them to school: Primary education for tribal children' written by Jnanapith awardee writer and an expert on tribal studies Sitakant Mohapatra would serve as a manual for the various NGOs and government agencies for providing education to tribals and their overall development, he hoped. It can be pointed out that while Orissa is a poor State, its tribals are even more poorer due to lack of education.

Biswamoy Pati's "Identity, Hegemony, Resistance : Towards a Social History of Conversions in Orissa, 1800-2000" Examined from within the framework of social history, the author delineates the evolution of the caste system in Orissa over the colonial and post-colonial period, bringing to life those involved in this process. Besides interrogating many commonly held assumptions, it opts for a far more flexible and interactional paradigm. As a result, this study accommodates a whole range of features related to the historical contexts and the complexities generated by the process of conversion.

RESEARCH OUTCOME

The present study intends to show up those social, economic, and cultural transits of Kandhamal and their primary education and some activities act as barriers in their progress of education. It also tries to highlight the activities educational institutions to act the formulation of appropriate educational policies

and programmes to attract the tribal children's to schools. Since, the communal violence does some problems for the growth and development of education in Kandhamal, the researcher finds out the precautions and protections made by the Government. Keeping these in view, the researcher puts the logical and considered plots to reveal the problems of education before the forefront of public. This work furnishes some drops of knowledge to the future endeavors to get rid of the current communal and social problems for the social solidarity and cultural magnanimity of Kandhamal district in Orissa.

CONCLUSION

However, the study explores the peculiar socio, economic conditions along with the traditional superstitious values of the society and the inferior status given to the tribal children which contributes their dropouts from the schools in the Kandhamal. Indeed. the study also intends to look at the educational policies and programmes and their weaknesses to tackle the problem which would influence the government to take corrective measures based upon the study. Moreover, the present study may help the policy makers to know the defects in the process of implementation and to revise policies according to the need.

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