

Chapter - 7

Major Findings of the Study

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Education is the key concept to the development of human resources. For the tribals, education is the pivot on which their success depends. Education knowledge gives inner strength, which is very essential for the tribals for attaining freedom from exploitation and poverty. Due to ignorance arising out of illiteracy, the tribals have not been able to take advantage of new economic opportunities. The most important aspect of education in the tribal areas is that of informing the community of the new innovations. So, education must be meaningful to the people. Indian Constitution has made specific provisions in Article 15 (4) and 46 for promoting education among the Scheduled Tribes. The Ministry of Education, which is responsible for the educational development. Some of the activities taken up by the Ministry of Education for promoting education among the Scheduled Tribes are provision of scholarship, research fellowship, reservation of seats in hostel and educational institution have been instructed to relax the norms for tribal students admission. In West Bengal, Department of Education, Tribal Welfare implement the education programmes for Scheduled Tribes and operate the facilities of grants, scholarships, hostels and ashram schools etc.

From my survey work, the literacy among the Schedule tribes in Jalpaiguri was 15.07 per cent. 30.5 per cent of the Scheduled Tribes population in the age group of 7 years to 10 years and above is found to be literate as the year 2001; the literacy rate being 45.5 for males and 20.00 for females. On the others age group of 11-20 years and above is found to be literate 20.5

per cent, 21-35 years and above is only 2.5 per cent. But the literacy rate after 2001 is slowly increasing.

On the other district Cooch Behar, the literacy among the Scheduled Tribes was near about 15 per cent. 40 per cent of the Scheduled Tribes population in the age group of 7-10 years and above is, 18.5 per cent. The main cause of slow progress in literacy is as follows :

1. Poverty of the parents.
2. Contents of education.
3. Medium of instruction.
4. Education policy.
5. Government help is not sufficient.
6. Inadequate educational institution for higher study. Trends of absenteeism.
7. The effect of Dooradarshan, T.V. programmes.

1. Poverty of the Parents :

In Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar for the poverty-ridden parents, education of their children is a luxury item, which they can hardly afford. The children assist their parents in earning their livelihood. Grown up-children also look after the younger ones when the parents go out for work either as cultivator or as labourers.

In the remote tribal areas, also has to share the blame for depriving the children of the poor parents of the facility of education.

2. Contents of Education :

The curriculum of education for the tribals has to be carefully evolved. It has to take into consideration the socio-cultural milieu of the Scheduled Tribes. Tribes are not accepted the present curriculum. Presently the general contents of education have been extended to the tribal areas which in many cases are not relevant. Particularly at the primary stage. So, the impact to influence to higher education.

Inadequate Educational Institutions for Higher Studies :

The tribals of Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar district suffer from inadequacy of educational, institutions, boarding and lodging facilities. Even where centres have been reopened, about 40 per cent of them are without building. The supporting services, such as the incentives in terms of scholarships, book grants etc. are very insignificant and generally do not attract the children. For example, a student of Class V are received Rs. 20=00 (twenty) but the grammar book like English or Bengali, minimum cost Rs. 20-30 rupees. So the Book Grant is not sufficient. Another grants like compulsory charge of tribal students is Rs. 35=00 but the maximum of the Every Educational Institution is Rs. 60=00 to Rs. 65=00. Another important is, every grant is not reach in proper time. Most of the grants are received at the end of the session or middle of the session.

In Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar there are no wider scope of Education. Only 9 - 10 colleges are situated in Jalpaiguri and the colleges are mainly situated in town area. But tribal students are situated in hill areas. So the communication gap is the most important problem for education. In the tribal areas the problem of absenteeism of the teacher is one of the important factors affecting the education. They generally remain absent for days together due to absence of supervision over them also lack the dedication to educate the tribals. The children and also the parents, cannot afford to waste their time and generally opt to drop out from the schools.

3. Medium of instruction :

The medium of instruction in the schools or college is a vital problem for the tribals. Even after 50 years of Independence we have not been able to provide education to the tribals in their mother tongue. As a result the tribal children are not generally able to follow the lessons given to them in the school in the language, which is totally strange to them. The tribals, undoubtedly, form linguistic minority groups and entitled to facility of instruction in their mother tongue at the primary school stage. The Constitution of India specially provides for adequate facilities for

instruction in mother tongue at the primary stage of education. But this system cannot be seen in Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar districts.

The level of economic activity in tribal village in Jalpaiguri is very low yet, the potential of their resource endowments is only partially utilised. Opportunities for better utilisation of available manpower should be created through programmes of horticulture, animal husbandry, piggery and allied occupation, cottage industries based on the local raw materials. Due to illiteracy no developmental activity for benefiting the tribal population will succeed in this district.

On the other hand the level of economic activity in Tribal village in Cooch Behar is so good with the help of government from 1993-'96. A good number of tribal people engaged with poultry farms, goat farms, pig farms etc.

Commercial vending of liquor in the tribal areas has caused serious damage to the tribal economy resulting in impoverishment of the tribal families. Brewing of indigenous drinks of self-consumption is a traditionally permissible activity among the tribals. In Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar Tribal people are affected by this situation. As a result they suffer from various diseases.

However, through integrated tribal development projects certain problems have been solved.

IV. Education Policy :

There is no clear education policy for the tribal peoples in both districts. The general education policy is not totally accepted. As a result the scope of higher education is less for the tribes and most of the post for service is still lying vacant. Lack of administrative policy regarding the educational

institution in tribal areas adversely affects the education of the tribals in both districts.

V. Effect of Doordarshan:

The Doordarshan mostly affects tribal people. They follow the style of actors and in social life they act this style. They are not followed the good side of T.V. From my survey work that I find, in every Saturday and Wednesday most of the students are absent from the educational institutions in every year, during bonus time (Durga Puja) they buy television or tape recorders or cassette player. But are less interested in buying educational goods.

However, a general trend is that I found in my survey work is most of the students are not interested for higher education and stop or drop out from the educational institution and engage engaged in daily work and same as in case of Cooch Behar.

Economic Activity :

From my survey work I found a substantial section of the tribal population earn their livelihood as labourers mainly engaged in tea garden sector of Jalpaiguri. On the other hand a substantial section of the tribal people of Cooch Behar earn their livelihood as agricultural labourers or day workers. As per 1991 Census, the work participation workers percentage of total tribal population is 50.50 per cent of both the districts, which is much higher than that for the general population.

An interesting point is, the female worker participation rate is generally quite higher in most of the districts. The Scheduled Tribe population is largely rural based which has a higher female work participation rate than the urban tribal population. However, if I comparatively study the

government service, a small number of tribes are engage in this sector. Mainly in Group-D category.

Another important point is, a huge amount of rupees are allotted for the communication purpose, but the communication condition is not so good in both the districts. A good percentage of money pickpockets by the contractors.