
PROMOTION OF EDUCATIONAL RIGHT OF TRIBAL PEOPLE THROUGH GOVERNMENT SCHEMES AND POLICIES - A STUDY FROM SOCIAL JUSTICE PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Tribal people are living with a distinct and unique pattern which is culturally and socially different from the general people. In some states maximum number of tribal people are living in a miserable condition without enough resources and have a lot of issues and problem such as economic problem, illiteracy, unemployment, housing and nutrition problem. International conventions also advocate that tribal people should enjoy social political and economic rights for a healthy living. In tune with, our Constitution also guarantees fundamental rights including educational right. In spite of lot of tribal communities are facing many educational problems, hence government is trying his best to resolve these problems by implementing specific schemes and policies.

Keywords: Tribal people, Education, Social Justice, Human Rights, Scholarship Scheme

Introduction

One tool for development that moves a society from a state of backwardness to one of development is education. The level of education of a citizen determines the culture and socioeconomic advancement of the country. One of the main forces driving change in the direction of progress is education. Actually, education contributes to the inner strength of tribal societies, which enables them to face new obstacles in life, as well as the economic prosperity of the tribes. It is the single most significant way that people and society can raise capacity levels, remove obstacles, increase chances for long-term well-being improvements, and enhance personal endowments. An essential component of any equitable economic growth is education. Consequently, improving the economic and social circumstances of the Scheduled Tribes can be achieved in large part through education. Actually, education contributes to the inner strength of tribal societies, which enables them to face new obstacles in life, as well as the economic prosperity of the tribes. The level of literacy and education among India's underprivileged populations is a strong predictor of their social and economic advancement.

The idea of social justice suggest that a society should be constructed on the basis of equality, liberty and fraternity. The main objective of society is the improvement and flourishes basic qualities of human being and complete development of the individual. The concept of social justice is a fundamental concept which provides meaning and significance to life and makes the rule of law active. A society is said to be an ideal society, where no socio-economic inequality will prevail and strong legislations will be there to regulate all matters including social, economic and political justice.

In broader sense justice means providing rights and entitlements to an individual who is in need of that in a fair manner. Social justice signifies impartiality and righteousness as it manifests in society and it includes fairness in living a dignified life, healthcare, employment, education, superannuation benefits and more. For the implementation social justice in real sense in a society, it must be constructed on four pillars like human rights, access, participation and equity.¹

A tribe is a group of people with same language, culture, religion, or history. Every tribe is different from the others and will frequently have customs that are exclusive to them. They

¹*Human Rights Careers', What Does Social Justice Mean?* <https://www.humanrightscareers.com/issues/what-does-social-justice-mean> (last visited on June 20, 2024).

have a strong sense of oneness and coexist and work in the same geographic area.

India is home to the second-largest tribal population in the world, consisting mostly of Adivasis, or tribal people. An essential part of Indian society are the tribal communities. The indigenous people of the nation have distinctive lifestyles and customs along with rich traditions, cultures, and heritage. In spite of certain regional differences, the tribes have a lot in common, such as living in a relatively isolated location and being more homogeneous and self-sufficient than the non-tribal social groups.

Despite the sincere and anxious efforts of the government for the overall development of the Scheduled Tribes, they continue to lag behind in almost all the standard parameters of development. They cannot participate in the development process because they are unaware of most of the programs and policies that are designed to build them. This is mainly due to the high prevalence of illiteracy and the very low level of education of the tribal peoples. Therefore, the educational status of Scheduled Tribes and the role of management in this direction is very important. It is known that the educational level of the tribal people is very depressing compared to the rest of the population. That is why education is an important tool to improve the economic and social conditions of the Scheduled Tribes.²

Objective of the Study

The present study has been accomplished taking into consideration the following objectives -

1. To know the present status and magnitude of tribal people in India.
2. To focus the Constitutional provisions as well as international responses relating to the topic.
3. To discuss and understand the various beneficial educational policies implemented for tribal people.
4. To highlight some important judicial decisions for safeguarding the rights of vulnerable and marginal sections of the society.

Methodology

Mainly doctrinal methodology has been followed throughout the study. The study is based on secondary sources of data, such as books, statutes, journals, magazines and other documents available through the internet sources like search engines and websites.

² Ms. Alankrita Gangele, *The Tribal Educational Status in India: Galore Challenges and Issues*, Vol. 6, Issue 1 JETIR, 182, 188, 2019, <https://www.jetir.org/papers/JETIR1901A24.pdf> (last visited on July 18, 2024).

International Concern and Tribal People

The promotion of quality education and employability among marginalized children is one of the main focuses of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). In collaboration with UNESCO, UNICEF is assisting the government in achieving quality education for all children aged 6 to 14.

Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 concerns about indigenous and tribal people of different countries. It appeals the governments of nations to develop organized actions to safeguard the rights of tribal and indigenous people, including their social, economic and cultural rights, customary and traditional practices and institutions.³

According to Article 26 of the Convention, appropriate steps should be made to ensure that members of the tribal and indigenous communities have the same opportunities to receive education at all levels as the rest of the national community.

Article 27 provides that education programs and services for the affected communities must be created and carried out in collaboration with them in order to meet their specific needs. These programs should integrate their histories, traditional knowledge, technologies, values, and future social, economic, and cultural aspirations. The relevant authority must ensure that members of these communities are trained and involved in developing and executing education programs, with the goal of gradually transferring responsibility for these programs to the communities as appropriate. Furthermore, governments must acknowledge the right of these communities to establish their own educational institutions and facilities, provided that these institutions meet the minimum standards set by the competent authority in consultation with the communities. Suitable resources and funds may be arranged for this purpose.

According to Article 28 of the Convention, children who are part of tribal communities must be taught to read and write in either their common language or their own indigenous language, whenever possible. Article 29 suggested that the basic aim of education should be to impart

³ Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169) By General Conference of the International Labour Organisation at its seventy-sixth session, United Nations, Human Rights, Office of the High Commissioner, available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/indigenous-and-tribal-peoples-convention-1989-no-169> (last visited on June 25, 2024).

knowledge and skills that will help tribal and indigenous children to participate fully in an equal manner in their own society as well as in national community.

Article 31 provides that educational efforts must be implemented across all segments of the population, especially those in close interaction with the vulnerable communities, to eradicate any preconceived notions they may hold about these peoples. To achieve this goal, steps should be taken to guarantee that history textbooks and other educational resources present a just, precise, and enlightening representation of the societies and cultures of these peoples.

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is a complete and all-inclusive international instrument on the rights of Indigenous Peoples. The convention creates a set of basic rules that apply to indigenous and tribal peoples worldwide, ensuring their survival, dignity, and well-being. It expands on current human rights standards and essential freedoms, taking into account the specific conditions of indigenous and tribal peoples.

According to Article 11 of the Declaration, indigenous peoples and tribal peoples are entitled to practice and restore their cultural traditions and customs. Article 31 highlighted the indigenous people's entitlement to uphold, manage, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, traditional cultural demonstrations, as well as genetic resources, seeds, medicines, and knowledge of botanical and animal properties.⁴

Indigenous peoples have the freedom to express, practise, uphold, and share their spiritual and religious traditions, according to Article 12. Article 25 highlights that indigenous communities are entitled to uphold and strengthen their distinctive spiritual connection with their lands, territories, waters, coastal seas, and resources that they traditionally own, occupy, and utilize. Constitutional Concerns.

Constitutional Concerns

The State shall endeavour to further the welfare of the people by establishing and defending a social order in which justice, social, economic, and political, shall be ingrained in the national life, according to Article 38. The goal is to achieve both economic and social democracy.

⁴ United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 13 September 2007, https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf (last visited on June 25, 2024).

Article 46 of the Constitution of India promotes the educational and economic interests of SCs, STs and other weaker sections of the society and seeks to protect them from social injustice and exploitation.

Article 338-A of the Constitution of India provides for the establishment of the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes, which functions similarly like the National Commission for Scheduled Castes.

Article 350A of the Indian Constitution states that each state is required to provide sufficient resources so that students can receive instruction in their mother tongues. State governments have disregarded this recommendation for native people for decades. Because the tribe members receive their early education in a foreign language, they have limited comprehension and assimilation.

Condition of Education of Tribal People in India:

Education makes people independent and conscious. Undoubtedly, a person's level of education affects their quality of life and social standing. The level of education has a significant impact on a variety of factors, including family health and hygiene, employment, income, understanding about AIDS knowledge and family planning, and reproductive conduct.

According to the 2011 Census report, around 59 percent of Scheduled Tribes (STs) were literate in our country. The literacy rate of Scheduled Tribes improved to 69.4 percent in 2018-19, from 67.7 percent in 2017-18, this was the view of Arjun Munda, Union Minister for tribal affairs told the Rajya Sabha. This was against 78.1 per cent at an all-India level in 2018-19 and 76.9 per cent the previous year, the minister added.⁵

⁵ As told to Parliament (September 22, 2020): 45% of Beti Bachao-Beti Padhao funds not utilised in 2019-20, DTE Staff, <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/governance/as-told-to-parliament-september-22-2020-45-of-beti-bachao-beti-padhao-funds-not-utilised-in-2019-20-73496> (last visited on April 22, 2024).

Comparative Literacy Rate of Scheduled Tribes and Total Population (in percent)

| Census | 1981 | 1991 | 2001 | 2011 |
|-------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| All Social Groups | 43.57 | 52.21 | 64.84 | 72.99 |
| STs | 16.35 | 29.60 | 47.10 | 58.96 |
| Gap | 19.88 | 21.61 | 18.28 | 14.03 |

Source - STATISTICAL PROFILE OF SCHEDULED TRIBES IN INDIA 2013 MINISTRY OF TRIBAL AFFAIRS STATISTICS DIVISION GOVERNMENT OF INDIA,
<https://tribal.nic.in/ST/StatisticalProfileofSTs2013.pdf> (last visited on June 25, 2024).

Enrolment in School Education (Scheduled Tribes)⁶**For the Period of 2011-12**

| Class | Boys | Girls | Total students |
|--------------|----------|----------|----------------|
| Class I-IV | 7880643 | 7431511 | 15312154 |
| Class I-VIII | 10793289 | 10128017 | 20921306 |
| Class I-X | 12173157 | 11283050 | 23456207 |
| Class XI-XII | 737360 | 561250 | 1298610 |
| Class I -XII | 12910517 | 11844300 | 24754817 |

⁶ STATISTICS OF SCHOOL EDUCATION 2011-12 (As on 30th SEPTEMBER 2011), Government of India Ministry of Human Resource Development Bureau of Planning, Monitoring & Statistics New Delhi 2014, https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/statistics/SSE1112.pdf (last visited on June 29, 2024).

Source - STATISTICS OF SCHOOL EDUCATION 2011-12 (As on 30th SEPTEMBER 2011), Government of India Ministry of Human Resource Development Bureau of Planning, Monitoring & Statistics New Delhi 2014,
https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/statistics/SSE1112.pdf (last visited on June 20, 2024).

Major issues for low literacy rate among Tribal People

Tribal communities are rife with poverty, with many families finding it difficult to make ends meet. Attending school becomes less important when surviving becomes the first objective. Due to restricted economic options and the requirement that children contribute to home income, children are forced into employment at a young age.

Many tribal areas lack basic educational infrastructure, including essential teaching materials and sanitation facilities. Financial pressure often forces tribal parents to prioritize immediate work over their children's education. In addition, educational programs often use official or regional languages that are unfamiliar to tribal students.

The tribal children faces several challenges to get education in the remote and hilly areas. Absence of proper roads or perilous roads and poor transport facility makes it difficult for children to go to the school. This often results in significant dropout rates and low school attendance among tribal children.

Tribal communities face other kind of challenges due to cultural and linguistic differences, which may result in a lack of interest among children in aligning their distinct languages, cultures, and practices with the mainstream education system. The problem is further worsened by the absence of teaching materials and textbooks in the local language. Moreover, the inadequate infrastructure in many tribal areas, including insufficient schools, classrooms, and basic amenities, hinders the learning environment and raises safety concerns for underprivileged children. Parents often hesitate to send their children to school due to the lack of proper sanitation facilities and safe school buildings.

The Union and State Governments have spent considerable sums on the education of tribal youth, but the results are poor. The Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes says that the welfare of tribals will not improve if inter-tribal abuse is not

addressed and eradicated through education. In tribal areas, education can be the basis of holistic development.

Judicial Observations

In *Mohini Jain v. State of Karnataka*⁷ The petitioner Mohini Jain was turned down for admission to a private medical college in Karnataka due to the exorbitant annual capitation fee of Rs 4.5 lakhs. According to the Supreme Court, "charging a capitation fee for admission is illegal and amounts to depriving citizens of their right to education." The court ruled that "the right to education at all level is a fundamental right under article 21 of the constitution."

*Avinash Mehrotra v. Union of India & Others*⁸, The Supreme Court ruled that "safe schools are a necessary component of the right to education, as guaranteed by Articles 21 and 21A of the Constitution, and that receiving an education without fear of security or safety is a fundamental right." The State is required to make sure that children are not harmed in the process of exercising their fundamental right to an education, regardless of where a family chooses to educate their children (private schools included).

*Kshetrimayum Maheshkumar Singh v. Manipur University*⁹, the Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Admission) Amendment Act, 2012 changed the Manipur University, which was a State University, into a Central University in 2005. The CEI Reservation Act, 2006 applied a reservation system that is 15% for SCs, 7.5% for STs, and 27% for OBSs; however, the new Act increased its reservation percentage. Accordingly, a new reservation policy has been implemented, with 2% for SCs, 31% for STs, and 17% for OBCs. This policy has been challenged on the grounds of this pattern. The SC ruled that this increase is required due to Manipur's sizable ST population.

*Ashutosh Singh v. University of Delhi*¹⁰, due to the petitioner's failure to present the OBC caste certificate for the current fiscal year to the counselling authorities, the "spot admission" round

⁷ *Mohini Jain v. State of Karnataka*, AIR 1992, SC 1858.

⁸ *Avinash Mehrotra v. Union of India & Others*, Writ Petition (Civil) No.483 of 2004, (2009) 6 SCC 398.

⁹ *Kshetrimayum Maheshkumar Singh v. Manipur University*, (2022) 2 SCC 704, SCC Online Times, 50 Landmark Judgments on Education Law by the Supreme Court and High Courts in 2022 [Part I], <https://www.scconline.com/blog/post/2023/02/10/50-landmark-judgments-on-education-law-by-the-supreme-court-and-high-courts-in-2022-part-i/> (last visited on July 19, 2024)

¹⁰ *Ashutosh Singh v. University of Delhi*, 2022 SCC OnLine Del 1125, SCC Online Times, 50 Landmark Judgments on Education Law by the Supreme Court and High Courts in 2022 [Part I], <https://www.scconline.com/blog/post/2023/02/10/50-landmark-judgments-on-education-law-by-the-supreme-court-and-high-courts-in-2022-part-i/> (last visited on July 19, 2024)

for admission to the LLM program for the Session 2021–2022 was challenged. spot admission and counselling at the collegiate level. The court determined that since the respondent authorities never stipulated that undertakings pertaining to the production of caste or reservation-related certificates would not be accepted, they cannot claim that they would not be allowed to accept applicants who later produced eligibility certificates, such as the petitioner. It was also decided that the government must constantly make it easier for candidates to profit from reservations, especially when it comes to OBC and SC/ST restricted categories.

Policies and Schemes for Tribal People's Education

Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBVs)

In August 2004, the Indian Government launched the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) project to create upper primary residential schools for girls from marginalized communities in difficult areas. The objective of KGBV is to create boarding schools for girls from marginalized communities in order to ensure they have access to a high standard of education at the upper primary level.

KGBV is being implemented in those educationally backward blocks of the country where the female rural literacy is below the national average and gender gap in literacy is above the national average. The scheme provides for a minimum reservation of 75% of the seats for girls belonging to SC, ST, OBC or minority communities and priority for the remaining 25%, is accorded to girls from families below poverty line.¹¹

Eklavya Model Residential School

Eklavya Model Residential School (herein after called EMRS) was established in 1997-98 with the aim of providing high-quality education to ST children living in remote areas. The goal is to prepare them for higher education and professional careers, as well as employment in various sectors. The schools emphasize not only academic learning but also the overall development of the students. Each school can accommodate 480 students, spanning from Class VI to XII.

To accelerate the implementation of EMRS, it has been decided that by 2022, every administrative area with over 50% ST population and a minimum of 20,000 tribal individuals

¹¹ Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya, <https://govtschemes.in/ta/node/25#gsc.tab=0> (last visited on June 28, 2024).

will get an EMRS. Eklavya schools will be equivalent to Navodaya Vidyalaya and will offer specialized amenities for preserving local art and culture, in addition to providing coaching in sports and skill enhancement. According to the 2011 census data, there are 564 such sub-districts nationwide, out of which 102 already have an EMRS. Consequently, 462 new schools need to be established by 2022.¹²

Some educators believe that students from tribal backgrounds are slow learners. For sluggish learners, language is frequently one of the main issues. Promising attempts have been made by the Odisha government and civil society organisations to teach the Gonds, Bhils, Santals, and other tribal communities in their home tongue. Education experts report that tribal youngsters are reacting positively to these kinds of creative initiatives. Over time, the Koyas, Santals, Bhuyia, Bhatudi, and Bhumiji have all seen increases in their literacy rates.¹³

Pre-Matric Scholarship Schemes

This scheme, initiated by the central government, is carried out by the States/UTs. They manage the process of receiving online applications from students, verifying eligibility, and transferring scholarships directly to the bank accounts of eligible ST students through DBT. This Ministry allocates funds to State Governments/UTs after receiving their proposal which includes a Statement of Expenditure, submission of Utilization Certificate, and uploading beneficiary data on the DBT Portal.

The program is applicable for students in Classes IX and X. Parental income must not go beyond Rs.2.50 lakhs per year. An amount of Rs. 225/- monthly basis for day scholars and Rs. 525/- for hostellers for 10 months in a year will be provided to each eligible student. Money is divided at a ratio of 75:25 between the Centre and State Governments/UT, and at a ratio of 90:10 for North East and Specially Category States/UTs (UT of Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand). The Centre provides a 100% grant to UTs that do not have a legislature.¹⁴

¹² Ministry of Tribal Affairs Government of India, EMRS, available at: <https://tribal.nic.in/EMRS.aspx> (last visited on July 18, 2024).

¹³ Education for tribals: Bottlenecks and the way forward, By Abhijit Mohanty, www.downtoearth.org.in/blog/governance/education-for-tribals-bottlenecks-and-the-way-forward-74751 (last visited on April 22, 2024).

¹⁴ Ministry of Tribal Affairs Government of India, Pre Matric Scholarship Scheme, <https://tribal.nic.in/EMRS.aspx> (last visited on July 18, 2024).

Post-Matric Scholarship Scheme

This is a centrally sponsored programme administered by the States and UTs. They are in charge of inviting online applications from students via the State or National Scholarship Portals, verifying eligibility, and transferring funds to qualified ST students' bank accounts via Direct Bank Transfer (DBT). This Ministry releases funds to State Governments/UTs in accordance with their proposal, which includes uploading beneficiary data onto the DBT Portal, furnishing a utilisation certificate, and making a statement of expenditure.

Students enrolled in recognized institutions pursuing academic, professional, or training courses that mandate a minimum of a Matriculation qualification are eligible for this program. The yearly parental earnings must not surpass Rs.2.50 lakhs. The scholarship payment is divided into two parts: one for mandatory educational fees and the other for living expenses ranging from Rs. The monthly fee ranges from 230 to Rs.1200 based on the student's chosen field of study. The funds are distributed between the Centre and State Governments/UT in a split of 75:25, and in a split of 90:10 for North East and Specially Category States/UTs (UT of Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttarakhand). Center provides a 100% grant to UTs without their own legislature.

National Scholarship Scheme (Top Class) for Higher Education of ST Students

This is also Central Scheme fully funded and implemented by Central Government. Scholarship is provided to all eligible ST students for pursuing higher studies in prescribed courses in any of the 265 premier institutes of country such as IITs, AIIMS, IIMs, NIITs, etc. recognised and approved by the Government.

Scholarship is provided to all eligible candidate for the entire duration of the course. The family income of the aspirants should not be more than Rs. 6 lakhs per annum. The scholarship amount includes tuition fees, admission fees, stipend and allowances for books.¹⁵

National Fellowship Scheme

The National Fellowship Scheme has implemented with objective of providing more focused approach on the integrated socio-economic development of the Scheduled Tribes (STs). This

¹⁵ Ministry of Tribal Affairs Government of India, Scholarship & DBT, <https://tribal.nic.in/ScholarshiP.aspx> (last visited on July 18, 2024).

is also a Central Sector Scheme of Ministry of Tribal Affairs and every year 750 fresh ST students are given fellowship for pursuing M.Phil and Ph. D. Courses. While selecting the students, preference is given to girls, Didyangan and Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs). Rs. 25000/- is provided monthly basis for M. Phil fellowship and Rs. 28000/- is provided Ph.D fellowship. House rent allowance facility is also provided to the needy students.¹⁶

Coaching-cum-Guidance Centre for SC/ST

Based on the recommendation of Elayaperumal Committee, in 1969 the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India has established Coaching cum Guidance Centre for SC/STs. Primarily under this scheme four major centres were set up in Delhi, Jabalpur, Kanpur and Madras. Now more than 22 centres in different cities are successfully working under this scheme. During the training course, trainees get monthly stipend and free course books and limited stationeries.¹⁷

The objective of this scheme is to channelise the available educated SC/ST manpower into suitable vocations, to enhance their employability through coaching/training and to provide them vocational guidance and career information at the appropriate stages.

Vocational Training in Tribal Areas

The Vocational Training Centres aim to offer training and enhance the skills of tribal youths in traditional or modern vocations based on their education, economic trends, and market potential, to facilitate their employment or income generation.¹⁸

The scheme has been implemented for the benefit of the Scheduled Tribes as well as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups and can be taken up anywhere in the country but priority will be given to remote tribal areas, where vulnerable tribal people inhabit and areas affected by extremist activities.

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ Government of India, Ministry of Labour and Employment, CGC, <https://labour.gov.in/cgc> (last visited on June 20, 2024).

¹⁸ Ministry Of Tribal Affairs Vocational Training in Tribal Areas, <https://www.myscheme.gov.in/schemes/vtcta> (last visited on June 23, 2024).

Scheme of Coaching & Allied for Scheduled Tribes

Candidates from scheduled tribes, who come from underprivileged backgrounds and face social and economic disadvantages, encounter challenges in competing with those from more advantaged backgrounds. In order to create a more equitable environment and provide better opportunities for scheduled tribe candidates to succeed in competitive exams, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs endorses a program that offers coaching to disadvantaged scheduled tribe candidates at reputable coaching institutions. This coaching aims to prepare them to compete effectively in various exams for job opportunities and admission to professional courses. The program offers free coaching to scheduled tribe candidates for a range of competitive exams, including Civil Services, State Civil Services, UPSC exams like CDS and NDA, as well as professional courses such as Medical, Engineering, Business Administration, Banking, Staff Selection Commission, Railway Recruitment Boards, and insurance companies. The financial rules relating to the scheme have been revised during 2007-2008. Under this scheme coaching fees will be provided to each student on monthly basis which includes stipend Rs 1000/- and boarding/lodging charges for out station students Rs 2000/- for the period of coaching.¹⁹

Strengthening education among Scheduled Tribe girls in low literacy districts

The Ministry of tribal affairs has implemented a gender scheme with the goal of reducing the literacy gap between the general female population and tribal women. It aims to achieve 100% enrolment of tribal girls in identified districts or blocks, especially in areas affected by Naxal violence and inhabited by the Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs). Additionally, the scheme aims to decrease drop-out rates at the elementary level by creating a conducive environment for education. This scheme encompasses 54 identified districts in 12 States and 1 Union Territory where the Scheduled Tribe (ST) population is 25% or more, and ST female literacy is below 35% or its fraction based on the 2001 census data. Furthermore, any additional tribal block within a district—aside from the aforementioned 54 districts—that has a scheduled tribal population of 25% or more, as well as any tribal female literacy rate below 35% or its percentage, according to census data, are also included. The autonomous societies of the State Government/Union Territory and nongovernmental organisations carry out the plan.²⁰

¹⁹ Scheme Of Coaching & Allied for Scheduled Tribes, <https://www.myscheme.gov.in/schemes/scast> (last visited on June 25, 2024).

²⁰ Ibid

Tribal Research Institutes:

Tribal Research Institutes (TRIs) is the state-level research organization under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs. TRIs are expected to concentrate on their primary duties as a source of knowledge and research, similar to a think tank for tribal advancement. This includes preserving tribal cultural heritage, offering guidance to States for informed decision-making and laws, empowering tribal individuals and entities involved in tribal affairs, sharing information, and raising awareness.

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India supports 27 Tribal Research Institute (TRIs). These research institutes are engaged in providing planning inputs to the state government, conducting seminars, workshops various training programmes, research studies, collection and codification of customary laws.²¹

Few suggestive measures for improvement

- Literacy campaign should be done through some exceptional and attractive mode in different tribal areas to promote education of tribes. The Government should ensure that Mid-Day Meal should be available at every school and the quality and nutritious value of the food should be improved.
- Teachers play a vital role in education. In many places, due to incompetency of teachers, student lacks attraction and interest in schools. Special efforts must be made to train, improve the teaching quality of teachers and develop the innovative teaching method besides that local teachers from tribal community can be appointed in the school so that they can teach in local language and create interest amongst the students.
- Inclusion of culture, customary practices, folklore, and history to the curriculum can help to develop confidence among the tribal children and this approach may help to increase their enrolment and retention at school. School authorities may promote music and dance as an integral part of their cultural life and various sports like archery, football, and other popular local sports in their course curriculum which are extremely beneficial remedies for dropouts.

²¹ Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India, TRI, Research & Media, <https://tribal.nic.in/TRI.aspx> (last visited June 27, 2024).

- The governments need to establish full-fledged residential schools like Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya up to XII standard, closer to their habitations. These schools must provide comprehensive quality education including healthcare and prepare children for competitive examinations to uplift the marginalized children. This, in due course, will bring substantial and desired changes.

Conclusion

Education is the most important tool to eradicate poverty and unemployment. Education is important for personal, social and economic development. No civilization could flourish without educating its people. After independence, the Government of India launched several policies and programs and allocated funds for various schemes to reduce the hurdles in the educational path of tribal children. Undoubtedly, all these efforts are significant and valuable, but despite all these efforts, the rate of growth of tribal education is very sluggish. Tribal representation in higher education does not meet the expected level. Apart from government initiatives, mass awareness is needed and, in this regard, political leaders, NGOs, local media and students, academicians can play an important role so that these weaker and unprivileged communities get the opportunity of education and can flourish their talents and qualities by entering into a suitable avocation.