

# A Study on Educational Status and Factors it's Affecting of Adivasi People's in India

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**Abstract:** *In India 67.7 million people belonging to "Scheduled Tribes" are generally considered to be 'Adivasis', literally meaning 'indigenous people' or 'original inhabitants'. Out of the 5653 distinct communities in India, 635 are considered to be 'tribes' or 'Adivasis'. The Scheduled Tribe population represents one of the most economically Impoverished and marginalized groups in India. Although Scheduled Tribes are a minority, they constitute about 8.2 % of the total population in India (Census of India, 2001), or 85 million people in absolute number. The Scheduled Tribes are not discriminated against in the same way by the mainstream Hindu population as the Scheduled Caste population in India. While the latter group belongs to the lowest hierarchy of social order and is often considered impure or unclean, the Scheduled Tribes have, for the most part, been socially distanced and living outside the mainstream Hindu society.. About 93% of the tribal people live in rural areas (Census of India, 1981) and are engaged in agricultural pursuits. There are more than 400 tribal groups among the scheduled tribe population, each with their distinct cultures, social practices, religions, dialects, and occupations. Thus, the different tribal groups are highly heterogeneous, and their differences are a function of the environment in which they live, the degree of exposure to the mainstream Hindu population, government involvement in their education, daily lives, their economic status, and past history. The tribes are scattered in all States and Union Territories in India except for the states of Haryana, Punjab, Delhi, and Chandigarh. The tribes are heavily concentrated in the northeastern states of Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Nagaland although they constitute a small percentage of the total tribal population in India. Literacy and educational attainment are powerful indicators of social and economic development among the backward groups in India. During the British rule there was no organized method to educate the tribal communities except for the work undertaken by Christian missionary organizations in some regions in India. Currently, the tribes lag behind not only the general population but also the Scheduled Caste population in literacy and educational attainment. Education being the most effective instrument of empowering the Socially Disadvantaged Groups, all out efforts should be made to improve the educational status of these groups, especially that of the women and the Girl Child. In fact, the educational backwardness, prevalent amongst these people, necessitates an added thrust on their education, training and skill up gradation, as it will bring forth not only social empowerment but also economic empowerment. In these articles is attempt to expose the status of the educational level among the tribal community in India.*

## 1. Introduction

The term "Adivasis" (original inhabitants) refers to the Indigenous Peoples of India who possess distinct identities and cultures often linked to certain territories. The term is derived from the Hindi word "adi" which means "of earliest times" or "from the beginning" and "vasi" means inhabitant or resident, and it was coined in the 1930s. Officially they are termed as "Scheduled Tribes" (STs) which is a legal and constitutional term specifying the tribal groups with distinctive cultures, geographical isolation, shyness of contact with the community at large, traditional beliefs and practices, such as indigenous arts of dance and music, unique way of life and nature worshipping, living in unreachable areas. STs also refer to the groups living in unreachable areas with social and economical backwardness and highly depending on forests resources. Extending the system of primary education into tribal areas and reserving places for tribal children in middle and high schools and higher education institutions are central to government policy, but efforts to improve a tribe's educational status have had mixed results. Recruitment of qualified teachers and determination of the appropriate language of instruction also remain troublesome. Commission after commission on the "language question" has called for instruction, at least at the primary level, in the students' native language. In some regions, tribal children entering school must begin by learning the official regional language, often one completely unrelated to their tribal language. Many tribal schools are plagued by high drop-out rates. Children attend for the first three to four years of primary school and gain a smattering

of knowledge, only to lapse into illiteracy later. Few who enter continue up to the tenth grade; of those who do, few manage to finish high school. Therefore, very few are eligible to attend institutions of higher education, where the high rate of attrition continues. Members of agrarian tribes like the Gonds often are reluctant to send their children to school, needing them, they say, to work in the fields. On the other hand, in those parts of the northeast where tribes have generally been spared the wholesale onslaught of outsiders, schooling has helped tribal people to secure political and economic benefits. The education system there has provided a corps of highly trained tribal members in the professions and high-ranking administrative posts. An academy for teaching and preserving Adivasi languages and culture was established in 1999 by the Bhasha Research and Publication Centre. The Adivasi Academy is located at Tejgadh in Gujarat. The Adivasi Academy is established to create a unique educational environment for the study of tribal communities. The Academy is aimed to become an institute for the study of tribal history, folklore, cultural geography, social dynamics, economy, development studies, medicine, music, arts and theatre. With its multidisciplinary approach and related interventional measures, the Academy is striving to create a new approach of academic activism.

## 2. Methodology of the Study

The study is based on secondary data which is collected from the published reports of, newspapers, journals, Text book, reports journals and magazines and Information was also collected by surfing the net and from relevant websites.

**Objectives**

- To study the educational status of Adivasi Male and woman
- To critically examine the Factor which are affected Adivasi people's in education
- To study the steps to improve the Tribal Education

**Literacy trends of tribes in India**

Literacy is an important indicator of development among tribal groups. The trend of literacy of tribes in India from 1961 to 2011 is shown in table – 3. The percentage of literacy of tribes was only 8.54 per cent in 1961 which has increased to 63.1 per cent in 2011. But female literacy of tribes is only 54.4 per cent compared to male literacy of 71.7 per cent. During the post-Independence period, the Indian government implemented legislation and allocated funds to facilitate access to enrolment in primary education (grades I-V) in India. As a result, both literacy rates and gross enrolment ratios of boys and girls across the general population have increased substantially during the past 50 years.

**Table 1.1:** Literacy Status of Tribal Population in India from 1951 to 2011

Census years	Literacy Rate			Gender GAP	Decadal Difference
	Persons	Male	Female		
1951	18.33	27.16	8.86	18.30	---
1961	28.3	40.4	15.35	25.5	6.49
1971	34.45	45.96	21.97	23.99	6.62
1981	43.57	56.38	29.76	26.62	7.79
1991	52.21	64.13	39.29	24.84	9.53
2001	64.83	75.26	53.67	21.59	14.38
2011	74.04	82.14	65.46	16.68	11.79

The literacy rates for the Country as a whole increased from 18.33 per cent in 1951 to 74.04 per cent in 2011, with literacy rate for males at 82.14 per cent and that of females at 65.46 per cent. The literacy rate recorded an increase of 13.17 percentage points to from 1999-2001, the highest increase in any one of the decade. An encouraging feature is that the growth rate of literacy has been higher in case of females at 14.87 per cent than for males at 11.72 per cent during this decade. The literacy rate also recorded an increase of 8.66 in the year 2010- 2011. The gap in male-female literacy rates has decreased from 24.84 percentage points in 1991 to 21.70 percentage points in 2001 and further to 16.60 in 2011.

**Table 1.2:** Percentage of State/UT Wise Gross Enrolment Ratio in Higher Education (18-23 Years)

S.No	States / UTS	ST, Male	ST, Female	Total
1	Andaman & Nicobar Island	2.6	5.1	3.8
2	Andrapradesh	24.7	17.7	21
3	Arunachalpradesh	30.7	29.7	30.2
4	Assam	16.2	16	16.1
5	Bihar	12.2	9.8	11.0
6	Chandigarh	--	--	--
7	Chhattisgarh	8.8	7.1	7.9
8	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	5.1	3.7	4.4
9	Daman & Diu	19.6	12.1	15.9
10	Delhi	--	---	--
11	Goa	15.5	19.6	17.5
12	Tamilnadu	37.8	23.7	30.6
13	Telungana	34.2	24.4	29.2

14	Uttarkhand	41.9	49.5	45.7
15	West Bengal	9.4	6.6	8.0
16	Maharashtra	12.8	7.3	10.1
17	Rajasthan	17.0	10.6	13.9
18	Meghalaya	12.7	16.8	14.8
19	Manipur	24.0	24.4	24.2
20	Mizoram	23.4	21.8	22.6
21	Odisha	7.7	5.8	6.7
22	Mathyapradesh	7.9	5.6	6.7
23	Himachal Pradesh	21.2	20.7	21.0
24	Lakshadweep	1.8	5.7	3.7
25	Utharapradesh	26.2	24.0	25.1
26	Sikkim	13.0	16.3	14.7
27	Tripura	9.5	5.6	7.4
28	Gujarat	12.5	11.7	12.1
29	Haryana	---	---	---
30	Jammu & Kashmir	9.5	7.7	8.7
31	Jharkand	6.4	7.7	7.1
32	Karnataka	16.3	13.8	15.1
33	Kerala	13.3	17.0	15.3
34	Nagaland	11.9	13.1	12.5
35	Puduchery	---	---	---

Volume 03, no.07, July 2017 page14 source: all india survey on higher education. (2013 – 20)

**Factor's affecting the Tribal's Education****Social Factors**

More allocation of funds and opening of schools do not go far in providing education to the tribal's. Formal education has not been necessary for the member's of tribal societies to discharge their social obligations. Hence they should be prepared to accept education and it should be presented to them in such a way as to cut the barriers of superstition and prejudice. There is still a widespread feeling among the tribal's that education makes their boys defiant and insolent and alienates them from the rest of their society, while the girls turn modern or go astray. Since some of their educated boys felt alienated and cut off their bonds with their families and villages after getting education and good employment. Some of the tribal groups vehemently oppose the spread of education in their midst. Besides, some of their superstitions and myths also play their part. Some tribal groups believe that their gods shall be angry if they send their children to schools run by 'outsiders'.

**Economic Factors**

Some economic factors too are responsible for lack of interest shown by the tribal people in getting education. Since most of the tribal people are living in poverty, it is not easy for most of them to send their children to schools.

**Lack Of Interest In Formal Education**

In many states tribal children are taught through the same books which from the curriculum of non-tribal children of the urban and rural areas of the rest of the state. Obviously, the content of such books rarely appeals to the tribal children who come from different cultural backgrounds. He is fully served.

**Lack Of Suitable Teacher**

Lack of suitable teachers is one of the major reasons for the slow growth of education in tribal areas. Most of the teachers employed for imparting education to the tribal

children show little appreciation of tribal way of life and value system. They approach tribal people with a sense of superiority and treat them as 'savage and uncivilized' and hence fail to establish proper rapport with their students. The Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes Commission's report says that a teacher in the tribal areas must have a thorough knowledge of tribal life and culture. He must speak tribal language. Only so can he be in a position to act as a friend, philosopher and guide to the tribal people. Actually the gulf between teachers and taught can be best reduced by appointing teachers from the tribal community itself or a separate cadre of teachers for tribal areas, with some inducements, should be created to serve the educational needs of the tribal society.

### Language

One of the major problems in tribal education is that of language. Most of the tribal languages and dialects are in the most rudimentary stage and there is hardly any written literature. Most of the states impart education to tribal and non-tribal children alike through the medium of the regional language, which makes the education uninteresting and also hurts tribal

### Nature of Habitat

Most of the tribal villages are scattered. This entails long travels to attend schools. Unless the school situated very close to their villages and its site approved by the local people the result shall not be encouraging. School building also plays an important role in the growth of education among the tribal folk. Due to mismanagement, bungling and sometimes financial constraints, the building and sometimes-financial constraints, the building is seldom suitable to run an educational institution.

### Number of Teachers

Most of the primary schools run in the tribal areas are "Single teacher-managed whose presence in the school is more an exception than a rule". The enthusiasm of tribal people in the education of their children also depends considerably on the timing of school hours in different seasons. It should not clash with their important socio-economic activities. To many observers of the situation, the problem of education in tribal areas is the problem of wastage. It is not that wastage and stagnation are peculiar to the tribal communities alone but the extent of wastage is much larger in their case. The problem of absenteeism is a serious one in tribal areas. One sees a large number of students on the rolls but the actual attendance is really low, and the number of students passing out at the final examinations is even lower. The real problem is to create such economic conditions as could be conducive to the students developing sufficient interest in their studies.

### Steps to improve educational status among Adivasi

Drawing on the key challenges and problems of the existing education system and in order to make equality of educational opportunity for Adivasis a reality, the following recommendations are made to re-vision, re-structure and re-constitute the educational system, so that it can cater to the needs and aspirations of Adivasis and also enable them to be equal and empowered citizens of India.

### Policy Level

Broad-based democratic exercises should facilitate the development of comprehensive and inclusive policies that address the existing problems. Viewed from this perspective, it would appear that the Adivasi's have not received detailed attention in education policy making. There in visualization needs to be addressed by formulating new initiatives (at the Central and State levels) that are integral to the policies of the dominant education system and are also stand-alone policies. This would involve creative development of programmes that are built around the knowledge, identity and languages of Adivasis, which would, however, also enable their participation in the larger society. New realities including large scale seasonal migration must be addressed by facilitating more open structures of schooling and educational access. Recognition or certification of varied knowledge forms and innovative learning, leading to a diversity of livelihoods and vocations needs to be facilitated.

### Structural Level

The need for synchrony between the Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA), the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), the Ministry of Environment and Forests, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and other allied ministries where a plethora of programmes (many in discord with each other) are deployed is urgent. The linkages between central schemes and their state-based implementation need to be streamlined.

### Institutional Level

The functioning of the Tribal Research and Training Institutes (TRTIs), and the Ashrams alas needs to be revisited so as to make them engaged and responsive institutions. In many cases, the introduction of new institutions including those run by private agencies and religious and welfare groups needs to be reviewed. The lack of monitoring of such institutions poses a problem and may in the long run be detrimental to the broader philosophy of education. New institutions should involve participation, decision-making and monitoring by Adivasi communities. Democratic decentralization in the true sense will involve community inputs and ownership. Strengthening of School Monitoring Committees is also a way to ensure this.

### Administrational Level

The following steps need to be undertaken so as to democratize, facilitate transparency in the educational system for Adivasis Establish a special cell for Adivasi education at the Ministry of Human Resource Development or setup a desk with a Special Officer supervising all programmes, funds and data related to Adivasis and their education.

- Currently, Ashrams alas/Vidyalayas etc., are run by several administrative units (Education Department, Department of Social Welfare, Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Zillah Paris had, Forest Department, ITDA among others). There is an urgent need to review the functioning and impact of these institutions and facilitate changes, so that these schools are not parallel and inadequate (as they are at present). Instead, efforts should be made to ensure that they are comparable in funding, functioning, administration and impact.

- Bridge the huge information gap that exists between various schemes of the different ministries and the people, so that the schemes may be better utilized.
- Revisit the current classification of Scheduled Tribes / Denotified Tribes, particularly in the context of its variations across many states. Rethinking of official classification is also crucial in order to make sure that the most vulnerable communities are not excluded as they may fall out of these categories.
- Address hurdles in obtaining caste/tribal-certificates. Issues of seat capturing (in educational institutions) by newly classified 'Scheduled Tribes' and the problem of representation needs to be addressed.
- Develop a specialized cadre of teachers for Adivasi areas with focus on recruiting representative members from varied Adivasi communities. Emphasize improved teacher training (including integrated and multi-language abilities, new pedagogies etc.), professionalism, equal pay and career growth opportunities to such teachers. Develop additional teacher education programme/modules including incentives for teachers working in Adivasi schools.
- Improve processes and periodicity of reviews of programmes. Allow for in-built monitoring and review processes by educationists, elected representatives and members of civil society groups.

### 3. Conclusion

Education is the key to tribal development. Tribal children have very low levels of participation. Though the development of the tribes is taking place in India, but the pace of development has been rather slow. If govt. will not take some drastic steps for the development of tribal education, the status of education among tribes will be a story of distress, despair and death. Hence time has come to think it seriously about tribal education and inclusive growth. So, there is an urgent need for various govt. interventions, planners and policy makers to address this problem and allocate more funds in the central and state budgets for tribal education. Easy access and more opportunities should be provided to the tribal children in order to bring them to the mainstream of economic development. The Centre should review the status of tribal education with state governments to ensure that the tribal's receive better and relevant education. Quality education can also be a major tool in combating the Maoist menace.

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