



## **Educational Status of Tribal Ashram Schools in India: A Review**

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### **Abstract**

The tribal population in India is concentrated in the backward hilly areas and the thick of the forests. Ashram schools provide education for their enrichment of personal life and skills of survival in society. The poor access to school, lack of physical facilities, poverty, and lack of awareness of food and hygiene among scheduled tribespeople about the importance of education are also major reasons for low educational development among scheduled tribes' population in India. Ashram schools in general need to provide good residential and individuals are needs to provide boarding and good food/lodging facilities. Ashram school functions need to be provided more significantly, within a structured and systematic framework.

**Keywords:** Ashram school, Tribal Education, School Education.

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Faculty of Education and Psychology,  
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The concept of ashram schools is derived from the term ashram, which has its origins in ancient Indian culture of education. In one sense, the guru and his wife provided care and support to the students that are conducive for their enrichment of personal life and skills of survival in society. At the initial stage of independent India, the individuals belonging to Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) underwent problems in these schools, hence, ashram schools had the main objective of leading to the educational advancement of SCs and STs. The initiation of the schools began in 1922 in Gujarat for the educational upliftment amongst the tribal. From the beginning, boarding and lodging for the tribal students were provided free of cost. The location of the Ashram Schools was in natural surroundings, with the main motive of depicting them as traditional ashrams.

In the 1960s, Ashram Schools were started as an experimental basis. The formulation of appropriate measures for adequate functioning led to their success. After they have attained achievement, they have become a popular Government measure for imparting education to the tribal population. Ashram schools render a significant contribution in providing solutions to the problems experienced by the students, such as low enrolment, high rate of absenteeism, drop-out, inadequate performance in-class assignments and tests, and deprived quality of students. The teachers working in ashrams provide efficient training, instructions, and guidance that would lead to their welfare. The education that is provided to the students includes academic concepts, vocational training, handicrafts, and training in the areas of agriculture, horticulture, spinning, and other trades. The main purpose of training is to make the individuals capable of employment opportunities or self-employment. Training requires the provision of materials and due to financial problems, vocational education in these schools has been in an underdeveloped state.

The tribal population in India is concentrated in the backward hilly areas and the thick of the forests. It is an accepted fact that the tribal are economically backward and children work on the farms to supplement the family income. The tribal parents are not in a position to feed their children and send them to schools. K.Sujatha (1981) observes "their distinct culture and traditions, primitive methods of production, abject poverty, their close relation with forest for their livelihood and their limited world view, etc., do not provide a conducive atmosphere for the educational development of their wards. Even if we provide opportunities to them similar to other communities, they may not be able to use its potentialities because, of the above-mentioned factors. Therefore, there is a need for planning for separate and specific agencies to look after the educational development and problems of tribal schools. The emergence and importance of Ashram schools should be seen and analyzed in this context". So, community schools need to manage ashram schools and run for equally competent with General areas schools in India.

### **Management of Ashram Schools:**

As far as the management of the Ashram schools is concerned, one can find two types of Ashram schools in India:

- 1) Those are maintained and financed by the Government.
- 2) Those are maintained by the voluntary social organizations and assisted by the State Government.

### **Objectives of Ashram Schools:**

Ashram schools are expected to fulfill the duties of educational development of the STs. The objectives of opening the Ashram schools are:

1. To admit those ST students who are unable to continue their education without the assistance, of the Government.
2. To Provide facilities to ST boys and girls to improve their standard of life.
3. To improve and develop their talent, make them aware of their inner strength, capacity and build self-confidence among them.
4. To train them in vocational education with an emphasis on household industries.
5. To protect and preserve the uniqueness of tribal folk dances, music, culture, and heritage.

The studies have been done with different variables, i.e. geographical isolation, cultural differences, and exploitative practices are major factors behind low human development and educational backwardness of the Scheduled Tribes (STs) population in India. Similarly, the poor access to school, lack of physical facilities, poverty, and lack of awareness of food and hygiene among scheduled tribes people about the importance of education are also major

reasons for low educational development among scheduled tribes' population in India. The studies have been done on ashram school on different functions of the betterment of ashram school.

### **Functioning of Ashram Schools**

- **Medium of Teaching-Learning**

Nambissan (1994), discussed some critical issues about the medium of instruction at the primary stage and reviewed the policy and practice relating to mother tongue education for tribal children in India. Quality education in the mother tongue is suggested for schools to enrich the experience of education for these children.

Kumar (2004), with the help of the school and household survey carried out in an Integrated Tribal Development Project Area, attempted to investigate issues related to access, enrollment, retention, and quality of education in Gujarat tribal areas. The findings of the school survey indicate that villages mainly tribal have greater access to the classroom. School functioning is low due to teacher absence and poor attendance. Jojo (2013) found that confusion about the use of the medium of instruction. Sahu (2014) reported that appointment of local teachers so they can provide education in the local language.

UNESCO (2010) In the middle of the nineteenth century, the tribal communities were sufficiently well managed by the local people in the community with their survivals. Earlier the rights on every natural resource were distributed equally with very minimal risk claimed to fulfill the basic need. In the year 1973, it was announced and noted by the Government of India that certain tribes are been considered in the Primitive Tribe Group, whereas Korku was not comprehended in the Primitive Tribe Group though the tribe was eligible. In 1871 British had done an initial census which showed that Korku's population is the smallest amount compared to Sahariya and Baiga tribes. At the same time, both the tribes had been considered in the Primitive Tribe Group. It was also acclaimed in 1931 census that in Korku community had only 3 males' literate and not a single female had taken advantage of educational opportunity while in 1961 it was recorded in the census that the ratio of literacy heightens by 61 males and only 5 females, which was comparatively less for females covering Central India. According to census 2001, it was reported that out of the population of Korku tribes 5, 74,481 people say that one owns to speak the Korku language and in the list of 196 endangered languages of India, UNESCO included Korku language also.

Dar & Najjar (2017) found that the problem with teaching tribal children is their failure to adapt to conditions of nontribal schooling. A disparity between school culture and children's family culture has developed a situation of cultural mismatch, resulting in disciplinary

problems, management problems, and low sensitivity of tribal children to academic activities. Narwane (2017) studied that The communication gap, quality of education, medium of instruction, and livelihood, there was frequent migration was affecting korku children and their development.

- **Teaching-learning methods**

Thakur (1995) A report by Planning Commission's Evaluation note on amalgamated tribal development projects in 1997 commented that the respected programs for the tribal population were not up to mark and effective. It was also observed that the primary section schools were running without any obstacles, but again and again, in other schools, it was noted that teaching staff was lacking. Also, Gautam (2004) investigated that there was an increase in the dropout ratio among tribal children. He investigated that the causes for the high drop-out ratio in tribal schools are due to the wrong medium of instruction, and its effect in tribal areas there was an appointment of non-tribal teachers and communication gap between the teachers and tribal children. Jojo (2013) found that faulty methods of teaching, unqualified and inexperienced teaching.

- **Physical facilities**

Bhatty (1998) states that the state has a crucial role to play in improving the quality of schooling facilities & reducing the direct cost of education. Kumar (2004) found that Many schools still lack basic amenities like drinking water, toilets, a library, etc. Pathania et al., (2005) The study was conducted in the three tribal districts of HP — Kinnaur (Kinnaura community), Lahaul and Spiti (Bhot community), and Chamba (Gaddi community), to assess the problems faced by tribal adolescents in getting an education. A self-structured schedule was administered to the respondents - 300 adolescents (150 males and 150 females) in the age group of 15-20 years. The findings showed that home constraints were perceived as medium-level constraints, whereas physical facilities in the classroom, non-availability of books, and stress and fears experienced at school were reported to be the high-level constraints. Chattopadhyay & Durdhawale (2009) A study, focusing on primary schooling in the tribal district of Maharashtra, authored by Aparajita Chattopadhyay and Vijaya Durdhawale concludes that the stresses on infrastructural improvements, provision of personnel for clerical works, proper maintenance of accounts that reflects the reality of primary schooling and strongly favors the introduction of tribal languages for basic education. Andrabi (2013) focused on the status of education among the Jammu and Kashmir Scheduled Tribes and compare it with the national tribal level. Poverty and lack of adequate infrastructural facilities tend to be significant barriers to educational attainment. Jojo (2013) found in the ST children

in central and eastern India that General conditions and lack of upkeep and maintenance of classrooms were found to influence children's learning especially in subjects like Mathematics, Science, and English.

Also, Swangla & Kuldeep (2014) reported that distant schools and lack of physical facilities. Geddam (2015) reported that analysis of EMR school data revealed that the EMR School is not managed as per the guidelines. Although the arrangement of the blackboards in the classrooms is appropriate the maintenance of the boards is poor, the number of toilets is lesser than the required number, considering the strength of the students, and maintenance was found to be not up to the mark.

Kanchan (2015) found that was noted that the condition of the school was not good and the tribal development department for their growth they were sending the tribal kids to private schools in a large amount.

- **Economic conditions**

Sujatha (1994) reported that one of the important guidelines for growth in inclusion is education in the economy of India. Singh (1995) studied that Drop-out rates from primary schools were found higher for tribal children than for children from most other social and economic groups in India. Kumar (2004) conducted the household survey, it reveals that a large number of tribal children are still out of school, for both economic and social reasons, despite the massive expansion of primary schools.

Chattopadhyay & Durdhawale (2009) A study, focusing on primary schooling in the tribal district of Maharashtra, authored by Aparajita Chattopadhyay and Vijaya Durdhawale concludes that increasing sources of income is the only way to encourage willing participation in basic education as economic uncertainty and financial hardships are the chief contributor to the age-old disinterest in education among the tribes. Jojo (2013) found that Financial assistance was suggested for Ashram Schools for infrastructural development and requirement of better infrastructural facilities, more teachers, curricular aids with the enhanced scope of co-curricular and extra-curricular division for cognitive and motor development of children in Ashram Schools. Kelkar (2013) In one of the studies the Kelkar committee highlighted that the TSP budget should be devoted for the development of tribal people as a principle of additionally that is over and above the regular funds for the developmental programs and non-plan budget to the TSP areas as to other non-TSP areas. Development in the existing TSP fund granted was still another remarkable proposal by the Kelkar committee. Kabita (2014) reported that Due to the poor economic condition of the tribal people, they don't allow their children to spare their power in sending them to school

for education; in fact, they desire to join hands in labor work for survival. Kanchan (2015) found that The requirement of government was not limited to financial support but also they asked for managerial skilled people to run the school effectively and point out the loopholes and the needs to fill the gaps.

- **Food and hygiene facilities**

Biswal (2014) reported that the food provided in the schools and hostels was second-rated which was affecting the health of the tribal children. Also, the committee draws attention to the number of death in ashram schools in Maharashtra from 2001-02 to 2012-13 due to minor illnesses and insects' bites. Kabita (2014) reported that due to low-income children not getting good food. Geddam (2015) reported that the number of toilets is lesser than the required number, considering the strength of the students, and maintenance was found to be not up to the mark. Devara &Deshmukh (2017) Tackling under-nutrition is the single largest risk factor influencing disease estimates at the global level. The government of Maharashtra undertook Annapurna Project to provide nutritious meals to Ashram/residential tribal school students and found that The centralized and local kitchens in government tribal residential schools of Maharashtra are effective and important in tackling undernutrition in Tribal children through the provision of regular nutritious meals.

### **Recommendations**

For the development and improvement in the conditions of ashram schools, the recommendations have been stated as follows:

- It is vital to ensure, Tribal Ashram Schools have the necessary infrastructure, finances, teaching and learning materials, medical facilities, and technology.
- Technology has rendered a significant contribution in facilitating learning amongst individuals. It is rapid and a secure mode of learning and generating awareness.
- Supplemental remedial classes and coaching classes need to be organized for students belonging to deprived, marginalized, and socio-economically backward sections of society.
- In academic learning, some concepts are difficult to understand by the students, this leads to feelings of apprehension within their mindsets. In the majority of cases, students drop out of school, when they are not able to understand the concepts. Therefore, coaching classes will contribute to their enhancement of concepts.
- Vocational education needs to be strengthened. This education emphasizes several factors, these include sports activities, artworks, handicrafts, music, and dance activities.

- In ashram schools, it is recommended that emphasis should be put upon spiritual instruction and mediation.
- Emphasis should be put upon physical activities and exercise. Physical activities and exercise enable individuals to maintain their health and well-being. After a session of academic learning, when students get engaged in physical activities, they feel energetic and lively.
- Besides making provision of adequate infrastructure and equipment, extra-curricular activities, and other materials, it is essential to focus upon studies and enhancement of academic knowledge.

### **Discuss and Conclusion**

The studies conducted on ashram schools for the status of different areas of India by researchers in their doctoral work and it's helped to give a better understanding of the current status of the ashram school in India. Scheduled Tribes deployed in India. It gives a comprehensive view of the various assistance schemes currently underway and the problems they are facing. Various studies were reviewed to explore the problems and challenges faced by STs in ashram school and to understand their needs. The studies have, to some extent, contributed to the systematic management of resources and needs. Studies related to the education of scheduled tribes pointed out that the medium of instruction, the poor economic condition of parents, teaching and learning methods related problems, locality of village and schools, teacher-related problems, and lack of proper monitoring are the major issues related to the tribal education. Scheduled tribe students have an only average level of career/vocational aspiration and they have lower career aspirations than general students.

Similarly, the adjustment of scheduled tribal students is average. Studies also showed that variables like academic achievement motivation, mental health, personality, social competence, self-esteem, and creativity of scheduled tribes are comparatively lower than others. Studies related to tribal residential schools showed that the functions and facilities of schools are varying in different places. Conclusions of the studies pointed out the shortcomings of tribal residential schools and highlighted their advantages.

Ashram schools have the main purpose to discourage the students away from the atmosphere that is not conducive for learning and the development of their personality and approach. Also, Malyadri (2012) found that According to the basic parameter of tribal society is community life that is expressed through the various cultural festivals and celebrations. If teachers can engage in these occasions by paying due attention to tribal culture, then they can create a strong village educational center. They are inter-village schools, they are established



in areas, where normal schools cannot be established, and in most cases, backward tribal groups need to be covered.

Besides the impartment of formal education, emphasis is put upon physical activities, sports, games, dance, music, artworks, and handicrafts. These activities stimulate the mindsets of the students and they become more motivated towards learning. For the success of the schools, besides academic concepts, it is essential to organize cultural activities, so that schools are not just viewed as learning places but also as cultural centers. In these schools, there is a close interaction between the teachers and the students, they work in coordination with each other. Menon (2013) studied that 'The new schools opened in tribal areas to minimize issues, providing schools with facilities, tribal teachers' status and educational ability, the status of advanced curriculum and methods and teaching-learning material, enrollment and dropout information, evaluation system, and community engagement. These Single Teacher Schools started with many creative and revolutionary ideas in an isolated tribal area. Dicholkar's (2018) study reveals the inconsistency that despite having schemes, proper infrastructure, and various programs for tribal children, the legal framework presented that policymakers and the sad reality were an alarming stage of deprivation.

In ashram schools, certain deficiencies need to be improved upon. For instance, there is a lack of health/medical facilities, physical facilities (i.e. water shortage, deficient electricity) and there is not an adequate provision of dress materials to the students. These deficiencies proved to be barriers within the course of the acquisition of education and increase in the enrolment of students. It is one of the objectives of these schools to cause a decline in the drop-out rate of the students and increase the retention rate. Ashram schools in general need to provide good residential and individuals are needs to provide boarding and good food/lodging facilities. Ashram school functions need to be provided more significantly, within a structured and systematic framework.

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