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## EXCLUSION OF SCHEDULED TRIBES IN INDIA WITH REFERENCE TO EDUCATION

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Of late exclusion, as a concept encompassing the whole range of relational aspects of deprivation gained prominence in the academic parlance as well as in administrative agencies. It is concerned with the inability of certain groups to participate effectively in social, economic, political and cultural life. It is argued that social exclusion, as a concept provides systematic understanding of disadvantages along with factors responsible for exclusion in quantifiable terms leading to the formulation of inclusive policies. Naila Kabeer (2000) defines social exclusion as “the multiple and overlapping nature of the disadvantages experienced by certain groups and categories of the population, with social identity as the central axis of their exclusion.” To Amartya Sen (2000) the value-added ness of the social exclusion approach is its “emphasis on the role of relational features in deprivation.”

Despite the fact that the Constitution recognize education as a fundamental right of all Indian citizens under Article 21A, disparities continue among various Castes and Tribes. Among them Schedules Tribes, exhibit lowest literacy rates of all other due to exclusion. The paper analyses the various aspects of social exclusion among Schedule Tribes with reference to primary education in India and argues for a comprehensive policy which addresses various hurdles to accessing and availing education of this disadvantaged group.

Constitution of India identifies certain ethnic minority groups, traditionally referred to as tribes, as Scheduled Tribes under article 342 for special Consideration. Scheduled Tribes constitute 8.2% of the total population of the country. (2011 Census). They have suffered exclusion, isolation and under development due to their being ethnically different from main stream Indian society and due to their having a distinct culture, language, social organization and economy. They generally practice hunting-gathering and shifting cultivation and have traditionally inhabited river valleys and forest regions and historical nature of their isolation and deprivation has resulted in considerable deprivation. In their case exclusion can take several forms, such as denial of rights to resources in their vicinity and un intended consequences of policies of government and societal process what Sen would call “Active and Passive exclusion”. The Scheduled Tribes can further suffer from what San would call the constitute relevance of exclusion which rises due to their inability to relate to other and to take part in the life of the community which can directly improvised the members of the group. The Constitution of India had recognized this segment of population as weaker section of the society based on their social and educational backwardness and the age old social discriminations and physical-isolation had been subjected to



### **Literacy and exclusion**

Disadvantaged populations are more vulnerable and exposed to problem of social exclusion due to various factors one among them is education. Due to lack of education, groups or individuals exploited and the excluded from the main stream of the life, hence human resources of that groups minimized.

Education is a means to overcome social exclusion of disadvantaged group and it is a tool to reduce inequalities in the society resulting socio-economic change. Literacy is a key element of capability because it gives access to education and the qualifications system on which future effectiveness in the labour market and adult life more generally will depend.

Conversely, education can be a source of exclusion for children and thus carry with it the intrinsic problems this involves. This is particularly the case if, some children fail to meet the standard called for in the Convention of the Rights of Children towards 'development of the child's personality, talents, and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential.' It can also be exclusionary if the process of education fails to promote equal participation and access.

Scheduled Tribes face many barriers in attaining education, literacy compared to rest of the Indian society due to several exclusionary processes. The exclusionary processes include social, economic, political, and cultural which has made it difficult for these groups to access to education. The exclusionary processes also comprise isolation, health, education, hierarchy, displacement, migration, PDS and marketing etc.

### **Inclusive Policy :**

The government of India's approach to these historically marginalized groups draws on provisions made in the Indian Constitution which contain explicit state obligation towards protecting and promoting social, economic political cultural and educational rights. "The state shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people and, in particular of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all form of exploitation" (Directive Principles of state policy, Article 46).

Some of the constitutional Provisions which aimed to positive discrimination are

Article-15(4) : positive discrimination in education.

Article-16(4) & 335: preferential treatment in matters of employment in public service.

Article-46 : promotions of educational and economic interests.

Article-330 & 332 : Reservation of seats in Lok Sabha and State Assemblies.

Hence it is constitutional obligation design and implement special programmes and polices for the development of tribal communities.

### **Present Educational situation among Scheduled Tribes**

There has been significant increase in overall literacy rates and school participation rates across the country since the early 1990. This is conformed by the data from various sources including the National Family Health Survey-II (1998/99)



Reproductive and Child Health Survey 2002-04, the 2001 Census and routine monitoring information from the Dept. of Education. The gross enrolment rate has increased from 90% in 2003-04 to 98% in 2004-05. Similarly, the net enrollment rate has risen from 72% to 82% during the serves period (Dept. of Education 2006). A number of factors have contributed to the rising enrollment rate including the introduction of mid-day meals, opinions of alternative schools promoting the participation of parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) and massive enrollment drives. The national and state governments continue to deliver the programme Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan(SSA) to achieve Universalisation of elementary education.

**Table-1: Comparision of Literacy Rates (Census 1991, 2001 & 2011)**

Year	General Population			Schedule Tribes		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1991	64.13	39.26	52.2	40.65	18.19	29.6
2001	79.96	54.28	65.38	59.17	34.76	47.10
2011	82.14	65.46	74.04	Not released		

While enrollment and attendance in primary schools has increased, the quality of education remains a major concern. Little emphasis has been placed on making education more relevant or in encouraging learning by doing. Activity based and child centered learning arrangements are still very weak.

They are many situations where children mechanically go through five years of primary education and emerge barely literate, leading to community apathy towards schooling. The poor quality of education is reflected in the continuing low level of completion rates of primary schooling. According to RCHS-II(2002-04), only 37.8% of children have completed at least 5 years of schooling

Disparities in Primary education can be seen between children from different castes, economic group, sex, rural and urban, certain characteristics of households in different regions in India. These different forms of deprivation do not work in Isolation. The most disadvantaged children would suffer from multiple forms of exclusion and disadvantages including for example being Schedule Tribes living in poor and / remote location etc. It is therefore important to acknowledge the multiplicity of deprivations.

**Table-2 : completion rate of 10-12 years by social group (NSSO,1999-2000)**

Social group	SC	ST	Others
Male	36.3	32.6	44.8
Female	32.3	26.6	44.1



Using completion rates of Five years of schooling of a key indicator of education status, the ST population are disadvantaged when compared to SC, OBC and others. It is also being noted that ST children are more disadvantaged than SC in terms of education status. Regarding the accessibility of the education system for ST children issues such as the medium of instructions remoteness of their habitations, poverty and others factors are barriers to access for this disadvantaged group.

According to a UNICEF supported baseline survey which was under taken in 2005 by the National Sample Survey Organisation in 43 districts of the country, there is a significant disparities in attendance rates and also learning achievements between children from Scheduled Tribes and other Social groups.

**Table -3: Percentage of Children(6-14 years) attending school (NSSO, 2005)**

Social group	% of children attending school
ST	66.4
SC	72.5
OBC	78.1
Others	83.6

The percentage of children (6-14 years) attending school, which is 66.4% of ST is very low when compared will ST(72.5), OBC(78.1) and other caste(83.6). As mentioned previously this is an indication of the multiple disadvantages which tribal children face including poverty remoteness, learning in another language etc.

**Table -4: Percentage of Children (6-14 years) who can read and write(NSSO, 2005)**

Social group	% of children who can read and write
ST	52.4
SC	58.2
OBC	62.8
Others	72.0

Above figures Indicates the percentage of children who are can read and write disaggregated by social group. There is a significant difference between different social groups. Which is 52.4% for ST children is very low when compared with others i.e. 72%

In spite of several efforts made by the Government of India 13,459,734 children comprising 6.94percent of the total children in the age group 6-13 are estimated out of school (SRI-IMRB Report, 2006). Among Scheduled Tribes the percentage of out of school children is 9.54, for Scheduled Castes it is 8.17 which show disparities clearly among the social groups that are socially disadvantaged. Out of school children are high in rural areas when compare to urban.



**Table 5: Out-of-School Children aged 6-13 years: All India 2006**

Category	Percentage out of school children		
	Rural	Urban	Total
All children	7.80	4.34	6.94
SC children	8.55	6.25	8.17
ST children	10.11	4.21	9.54

Source: SRI- DMRB Survey, 2006

### Exclusionary process in Education among Scheduled Tribes

There are several reasons for the deprivation in education among Scheduled Tribes. The most important structural and procedural causes are as follows.

Many tribal habitats are inaccessible. Consequently, effects of development are either lacking or are sub-standard. Abject poverty of the tribal people is resultant and compounds the problem. According to the development indicators prepared by the Planning Commission, about 35% of STs are below the poverty line. The subsistence level of economy of the tribes is so regulated that the children also constitute a part of their economic activity or they play supportive roles in the economic pursuits of their families. As has been the case may tribal and rural households engaging children in agricultural and other allied activities makeup the enculturative process.

The physical distance to school is often cited as a barrier for children in India. The Scheduled Tribes are often live in remote areas where there are no schools. Unavailability of schools, lack of proper infrastructural facilities at schools, lack of motivation, self confidence and role models are also interesting factors for low level of literacy

Ill health is another major factor in the promotion and participation of tribal children in educational programmes. Despite the constant struggle for their lives, the tribal communities still cannot afford to manage sufficient and nutritious food to feed their children.

As the government occupies the natural resources by development projects or in the name of preservation of natural resources, the tribal communities have been one of the sacrifices for national wealth. It is reported that almost 40% of displaced persons in the country are from the tribal communities. Some tribes have been displaced from the forests without any proper compensation and legal procedure. Some tribes' land has been usurped by non-tribes and tribes farming their land have been encouraged to shift to cash crops by the government. Seasonal migration is another factor responsible for high absenteeism and dropouts.

The infrastructure and facilities for farming available and accessible to the tribal communities are not sufficient. They find it difficult to manage expenses. The changes in the topography of the land and the alterations caused due to the haphazard development programmes have pushed the tribal communities to adapt to forms of



farming alien to them.

Lack of sincerity and commitment of teacher towards Scheduled Tribes and towards their job is another important reason exclusion of Scheduled Tribe children for primary education. Teacher transferred to Scheduled Tribes areas feel that there are punishment posts, because the tribal villages are situated in very remote areas where no facilities. The teachers usually stay at nearer towns and frequently absent to the schools. Lack of proper supervision by the concerned officials is another reason for teacher's absenteeism.

Another element of social exclusion of ST children from primary education in India is the extent to which discrimination is practiced by teachers. Teachers, often not sensitized about the cultural traditions of the Adivasis tend to look down their ways of life as inferior. ST children are expected to run errands and are assigned menial tasks such of sweeping and cleaning the classroom. Higher rate of teacher absenteeism is reported when children are mainly from Tribal communities (Kabeer,11).

Exclusion arising from lack of familiarity with an official language and lack of shared medium are the greatest impediments accessing education. Language exclusion causes high dropouts.

In several ways Scheduled Tribe children are excluded from school education in the tribal area of India. Poverty, deprivation, poor economic condition, low earning, struggle for survival, dependence on forest products, seasonal migration are some of the other road blocks in providing universal education to scheduled tribes.

Tribal students had additional disadvantages arising out of social and location factor i.e., low levels of parental education, occupation, income and deprivation, are mainly responsible for poor performance of tribal children in the school. Other roadblocks include negative parental attitude to education, less parental support in school work, low level of motivation and poor self-esteem of children. Tribal children can perform well in school if the intervention programmes directed at them can overcome their deprivation.

In order to make education effective and sustainable building partnership between the community and the Government. Results from pilot projects Andhra Pradesh shows that community partnership not only augments state expenditure on education but also guarantees supervision and monitoring thus addressing an intractable problem for the State.

Decentralization of education management is another aspect that needs special consideration in the context of tribal areas. In fact, considering the geographical terrain and communication problems in tribal areas, it is crucial to restructure the existing system of educational management. Adaptation of structures such as school complexes and VECs to the tribal areas need careful consideration.

The perception of the quality of the education system by the parents and students and their assessment on the benefits of education (will their child get a better job) and the accessibility of the education system (distance cost etc.,) will influence the decision of whether parents decide to send their children to school.



These are the some of the impediments for the low levels of literacy in Schedule Tribe children

### **MEASURES TO BE TAKEN**

Government should take steps to improve parental literacy through night schools and timely awareness programmes should be conducted on education, health and other development programmes. Community participation is more important and be promoted.

Emphasis should be given to both on quality as well as quantity of education in the scheduled areas. School schedule and curriculum need to be shifted according to the requirement of Schedule Tribes

Incentives should be improved to encourage the Scheduled Tribe children taken in to account the economic participation of children on a family unit. Welfare programs should be linked with education of the child.

Decentralization educational management is essential. Proper supervision enhance the work of the school, teaching learning process and achievement of the students.

Physical distance of the school be minimized by increasing the number of schools in general and adequate number of Residential schools in particular. Teacher Pupil ratio should be minimized by recruiting adequate number of teachers in the tribal area.

Skill development, competence building and motivating teachers to equip excluded tribal children is necessary.

Education at all levels should be under control of the government only and common syllabus through out India will help them to compete the other social communities.

The government needs to pay more attention to the tribes. It is not because they are tribes, but because they are currently the most exposed groups to food and health insecurity.

The difference between tribes and non-tribes produces a prejudice, and the discrimination and exclusion based on the prejudice escalate poverty and malnutrition death in the tribal communities. Unless the Government of India rebuilds its consciousness and adopt and implement more affirmative public policies for the tribes, the government cannot prevent deaths from malnutrition or ensure food security in the country. If not, proper implementation of the constitution, the inclusion and educational development of Scheduled Tribes would not be possible.

The present paper reveal that, there will be a severe case of social exclusion which acts as an impediment in the development of education of the Scheduled Tribes. There is slow growth of education among the Scheduled Tribes as there is no relevant social policy for eradicating the social exclusion. There is a need for new and innovative policies and programs to be initiated to bring about inclusiveness for the education of Scheduled Tribes.



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