

Social Equity and Justice through the Education of Tribal People

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Abstract: National development is the all inclusive development of a nation. It will be possible only through the promotion of social equity and social justice by imparting proper education to all, especially the marginalized sections in the society including scheduled tribes. The socio-economic and educational conditions of scheduled tribes in India are very low compare to the national average. The major reason behind this backwardness is the lack of proper education. Many of the superstitions, cast problems and other social issues were caused by the absence of education. Thus comes the need of giving proper education to the Tribals. For this purpose it is important to make more effective policies from the part of government and ensure its implementation.

Key Words: Tribal people, National Policy on Education, Education, Marginalization, Social Transformation, Social Equity, Social Justice, Social Status, Economic Status, Governmental Policies, Literate, Illiterate, Drop-out.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Social equity is essential for the development of an egalitarian society. Education is the powerful instrument in the process of overcoming inequalities accelerating social transformation and achieving economic progress. It leads us to darkness to light. Education has become a fundamental right. This means that no person should be denied education at any cost. The National Policy on Education implies that up to a given level, all students irrespective of caste creed, location or sex have access to education of a comparable quality. To promote equality, it will be necessary to provide for equal opportunity to all especially for the marginalized in the society. In our national perception, education is essential for all. This is fundamental to an all-round development, material and spiritual. The states commitment towards the well being of the disadvantaged and marginalized sections of the society is evident from the special constitutional provisions made in favor of these groups. Article 14 of the Constitution of India guarantees that no persons will be denied equality before law. In spite of provision of free and compulsory education to all children up to the age of 14, a large chunk of children with special needs does not get meaningful qualitative education.

Education is a unique investment in the present and future. Every Country develops its system of education to express and promote its unique socio-cultural identity and also to meet the challenges of the time. Education in India stands at the cross roads today. India's political and social life is passing through a phase which possesses the change of erosion to long accepted values. The goals of secularism, socialism, democracy and professional ethics are coming under increasing strain. The National Policy on Education gives special stress on education for social transformation. Social transformation means standing for human rights, communal harmony, protection of the environment, structural changes and liberation of women, Dalits, Tribals and other oppressed groups.

II. IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL EQUITY & JUSTICE

Social equity implies fair access to livelihood, education and resources; full participation in the political and cultural life of the community; and self determination in meeting fundamental needs. As Martin Luther King observed, where there is injustice for one, there is injustice for all. Social justice on the other hand is the justice in terms of the distribution of wealth, opportunities and privileges within the society. The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action consider social justice as a purpose of human rights education.

The term 'equity' signifies development aimed at reaching the most marginalized and deprived population first. The genesis of equality and equity as concept of social Justice arose from a history of evolving philosophies of social organization and distribution of wealth and services. From the natural law to the modern concept of rights, this socially just distribution continues. Poverty exists at record-high levels in absolute terms,

disproportionately affecting the most marginalized groups in societies across the world. Equity involves trying to understand and give people what they need to enjoy full, healthy lives. Equality in contrast, aims to ensure that everyone gets the same things in order to enjoy full, healthy lives.

SOCIAL STATUS OF TRIBAL PEOPLE

When we speak about the social context of our country, we should go through a particular problem in our country. There is a culturally rooted belief in our society that there is a division between people who work with their minds and others who work with their hands. The former are created superior and to rule, while others to remain subjects and be ruled. For good measure, a divine sanction was also attributed to this society engineered caste hierarchy so that the so-called upper and lower spectrums of society internalized it as the will and design of God

When we come to the social context of Kerala, the seven decades of development after independence has brought about spectacular changes in the political, economic and cultural scenario of Kerala. The state has retained a unique status in its achievements in the field of education since independence. But it seems that the largest section of tribal population in Kerala was neglected in the educational field, despite of the governmental initiatives for welfare and progress in this matter. The Economic and social backwardness of Tribal people are basically a product of its educational backwardness. Many of the superstitions and caste problems and other social issues were caused by the absence of education. Promotion of primary, secondary, higher and technical education only will lead to the development of tribal's in India.

ECONOMIC STATUS OF TRIBAL PEOPLE

The population growth rate is substantially higher than the economic growth of the community. In Scheduled tribes, the working force participation rate for both males and females was higher than total population. But these were employed in labor, wood gathering, hunting, forest meal collection etc. A comprehensive scheme of welfare embracing every sphere of life, economic, educational and social can be effectively implemented largely through tribal's own institution like Forest Labour Comprehensive Societies. The economic uplift through co-operatives, forest development and cottage industries etc should precede the far reaching measures of social welfare like education, Wealth and clothing.

The earlier tribal traditional civil society was largely egalitarian and the caste hierarchy was non-existent among the Tribals. If one tribal family had four fruit trees, other had three or five; one family had four cows, another had two or three. Thus inequalities were marginal or minimum. However the present situation is different. The tribal traditional homogenous society is increasingly becoming a class society. Some of them have entered in to government job and few have become professional.

Economically policies should be implemented in tribal areas that the people of different tribes get the opportunity to attain economic betterment. Efforts should be made to remove their poverty and the sense of deprivation. They should be made economically self sufficient. The economic conditions of tribals are low. The government should provide proper educational facilities to Tribals in several areas along with the medical services. Proper training programmers and agricultural extension services are necessary to the tribal's.

EDUCATION OF TRIBAL PEOPLE

The National Policy on Education 1986, when speaks on the education of scheduled tribes says "The Curriculum at all stages of education will be designed to create an awareness of the rich cultural identity of the tribal people as also of their enormous create talent. Role of Education is important in the development of human beings especially in the case of SC, ST and Backward Communities. Article 21 a(part III of the fundamental rights) ensure that state provides free compulsory education to children in 6-14 age group. Besides article 45 in part IV of the directive principles is modified to enable the state to try and provide early childhood care and education for all children up to 6 years.

For the development of the tribal community, education is the most important element. It is powerful instrument to change the values and attitude of the people and create in them the urge of necessary motivation to achieve social mobility and social ascendancy. The overall development of Tribals should include their empowerment in education. Knowledge is power and knowledge comes through well defined educational supervision and percepts translate to educational policies "Essentially education is expected to infuse nature and develop a lasting desire to respect others and acquire the social skills to deal together.

Education is critical factor in all round human development. It is an area that the tribal communities lag far behind the national literacy level. The literacy rate of scheduled tribes, according to the 2011 census is 68.5% for men and 49.4% for women, which is far from the national average of 82.14% for men and 65.46% for women. The statistics with regard to the female literacy among the scheduled tribes is the more appalling with only 49.4% as against the national average of 65.46%.

Tribal education should be completely work oriented. The progress of education and training must not end with school, but lead to employment and services needed in the area. For this, a kind of education dealing with farming and small industrial establishment has been given. There are many difficulties in the promotion of education among Tribals. One of the most difficult problems is the fact that the tribal dialects are innumerable and teachers in different dialects are not readily available. The poverty and unwillingness of the parents to send their children to school due to economic consideration are other problems of Tribals. Tribal education is not opposed to main stream education. The general notion is that the tribal child needs to be motivated to attend the school. Both the parent and child need to be convinced that schooling is learning.

The dropout rates are high and level of enrollment is very low in Central Tribal Belt of India. This is due to the poverty in which their parents place greater pressure on the younger family members to start earning money at an early stage to support them. Administrative initiative should focus on the improvement of quantity as well as the quality aspect of tribal education ; production of study and reading materials locally and revamping tribal education to make in an effective instrument of building and sustaining partnership between the tribal community and the rest of the community including the government.

GOVERNMENTAL POLICIES

Government of India constituted Ministry of Tribal Affairs in October 1999 to give more focused attention to the development of the scheduled tribes. Further, National Commission for scheduled areas and tribes was set up to report on administration of the scheduled tribes followed by National Policy in Tribals, which seek to bring scheduled tribes to main stream. The draft policies focus on education, health, reservation of cultural and traditional knowledge.

The Indian states have adopted preferential policies and programmes for educational development of scheduled tribes since independence with the express purpose not only to bring socio-economic transformation in the tribal societies, but also to reduce the gap between the Tribals and the non Tribals. The main purpose of these programmes is to remove or minimize social, economic disabilities of Tribals and to bring them at par with other sections of the Indian societies.

The Panchayat Extension Act 1996 gave increased power and Jurisdiction to democratically elected bodies representing the tribe. It gives power to the Grama Sabhain both matters relating to protection of tribal custom and development work and regulations of mining of minor minerals, water bodies prohibition, minor forest produce, land alienation, money-lending etc.

CERTAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above studies I have come through certain conclusions and recommendations.

- Government and private agencies should take special effort for the high level of enrollment of Tribal children in Schools.
- Drop-out rates of Tribal children should be reduced by giving special incentives to the Tribal children and their parents.
- More teachers from the Tribal communities should be trained who can handle their own Tribal Dialects.
- There should be more awareness programmes among the Tribals to reduce unwillingness of parents to send their children to school
- Tribal education should be more work oriented.
- The Reservations given to the Tribals by the Constitution of India and by the various orders should be preserved and they should be given awareness about their rights.
- They should be given more opportunities in the political and administrative fields.
- There is a need of more Tribal schools in Tribal areas especially for girl children.
- Special economic policies should be made for the benefit of Tribal population
- The government should see that, proper policy implementation are done for the betterment of Tribals.

III. CONCLUSION

The Integration of Tribals in to the national mainstream, it is necessary to revisit the history of development aimed at tribes and their implementation. Lack of education is strum bling block to the Tribals in attaining a higher standard of life. Even though from the first five year plan on wards government showed special interest for the development of Tribals, it is widely noted that the government failed to bring positive changes in the overall development of Tribals in India. The marginalization of the Adivasis in India has not occurred due to their geographical isolation but because of their exclusion from the structures and institutions of power in India. To conclude, social equity and social justice in India will be possible only through giving proper education to the marginalized especially the tribal population of India.

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