



ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION FOR TRIBALS IN INDIA

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Abstract: *This paper makes an attempt to examine the access to higher education for adivasis in India. The discussion has explored the possibilities of bringing the governmental interventions under the ambit of affirmative action policies. It also represents various determinants of participation in higher education among tribes. The paper is organised in five sections. The section (1) provides a brief introductory account of tribal's and their status. Section (2) discusses the importance of higher education. Section (3) focuses on higher education and human resource development. Section (4) defines the governmental interventions for tribal development. Section (5) aims to presents the current scenario of tribal's in higher education. Finally section (6) concludes with a discussion of policy implementation.*

Key words: *Affirmative action, Indigenous technologies, higher education, tribal development.*

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INTRODUCTION

India is a multi-cultural, multi-lingual and multi-racial nation. It includes different castes, communities and social groups. There are 574 tribal's groups who have been identified as Scheduled tribes. They are considered as adivasis means indigenous people of the country. They have been described as aborigines, primitives, adivasis, vanajatis, and girijans etc. India has the single largest tribal population in the world which constitutes 9.7% of the total tribal population. The tribal communities in India largely concentrated in central and north-east India region. They are the most undeveloped section of the nation. The tribal's are socially, economically, politically and educationally isolated from the mainstream of society. Their living strategy is fully different. They are completely dependent on cultivation, forest product and haunting. So our constitution provides number of facilities, privileges and protections to the scheduled tribes. But their level of development is much lower than the non-tribal communities. Education becomes an important indicator of tribal development.

HISTORY OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA

Indian higher education system is the world's third largest education system next to China and USA. Higher education is one of the critical elements of the national development. It is a powerful tool to build a knowledge based society of the 21st century. The Twelfth - plan has highlighted access, equity and excellence as the three major concerns in higher education. The United Nations economic, social and cultural organisations (UNESCO) have defined higher education as it includes all types of studies, training and training for research. In the beginning of the British rule, the East-India company did not felt the urgency of higher education in India. But with the interest of some English intellectuals higher education get its foundation in India. In 1882 Lord Ripon appointed an education commission under M.W.Hunter to review the progress of education. Through this commission higher education was uplifted. In 1904 the Indian University Act, was passed by Lord Curzon which brings improvement in higher education. There are many Indian scholars like R.N.Tagore, J.L.Nehru, Radhakrishnan have emphasized the higher education in India. Tagore took special care of research work. Because research engage in creative and inventive works. For him the fundamental purpose of higher education is to build the human resource. Nehru had given priority on science, technology and industrialisation. His aim of higher education was to generate scientific, humanistic and ethical attitude. So he started higher education



institutions like IITs, National science laboratory etc. Radhakrishnan gave a clear shape to higher education in India. He tried to use higher education as an instrument of social change. He formed University Education Commission in 1948. He imparted vocational and technical education in universities. Radhakrishnan gave the liberty to universities for their personal development.

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT & HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher education plays an important role to achieve sustainable growth and development. Dr. Radhakrishnan produced a sharp picture of the relationship between education and human resource development. HRD deals with the process of development and implementation of the developmental programmes. It is a process of giving opportunities to people and makes things happen. To meet the requirement of globalised people qualitative basic and secondary education is insufficient. The knowledge and skill is needed to perform developmental activities. The scientific study, creating cultural identity, training of middle and higher level professionals, technical and managerial activities, creation of new knowledge through research, channelizing democratic process etc. works like a branch of higher education. It helps country's resource development. Higher education is the source in all walks of life. It supplies the much needed planning, designing, teaching and research. Development of indigenous technology, capabilities in agriculture, food security, infrastructure development and economic growth are possible only through higher education. It promotes internal co-operation and prepare the nation at its best form. It interprets the old beliefs and cultivates new knowledge. It reduces the gap from society. Human resource development emphasizes that aspect of development which is issued by the qualitative higher education.

HIGHER EDUCATION & TRIBES AFTER INDEPENDENCE

After independence Indian constitution has take some affirmative actions for the betterment of tribal's. The National Policy on Education in 1968 was a big efforts to equalise educational opportunity more inclusively. The government of India has launched time to time number of schemes and programmes to increase the participation of deprived classes in higher education. The government has now provided 7.5% reservation to STs in higher education institutions. The government also provide scholarship to pursue higher education in abroad. Fourteen tribal research institutes have been set up in various states of India. The



scheme of girl's hostel for tribal girls started in the Third plan, which is a useful instrument to inclusive higher education. Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship scheme was introduced for pursuing higher education among the SCs and STs. The National Accreditation Regulatory Authority for higher educational institutional bill 2011 provides a national commission for maintaining and determining higher education standard. The UGC has also relaxed norms for giving development grants to colleges located in backward and rural areas.

After 1950s the things started to change. Numbers of affirmative actions were taken to promote social and economic equality. In the beginning of 1970s higher education formed as one of the important section of investment. The First and Fifth Plan was focused on qualitative education. Through these plans tribal's were facilitated with some interventions. After 1990s the economic reform brings through higher education. The economic growth growned up under the influence of knowledge. Education was highly impacted by LPG model. By the end of Tenth Plan period, National Literary Mission was launched. Under this scheme 12% students were availed higher education. Now it increased by 17.50%. But the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) is low in rural areas as compared to urban areas. At present, India has more than 18067 colleges. But the unequal representation of tribal students creates a serious problem in front of the nation.

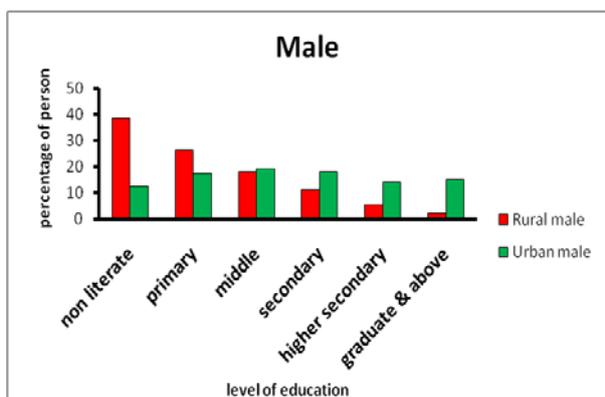


Fig.1 Education level of rural & urban male

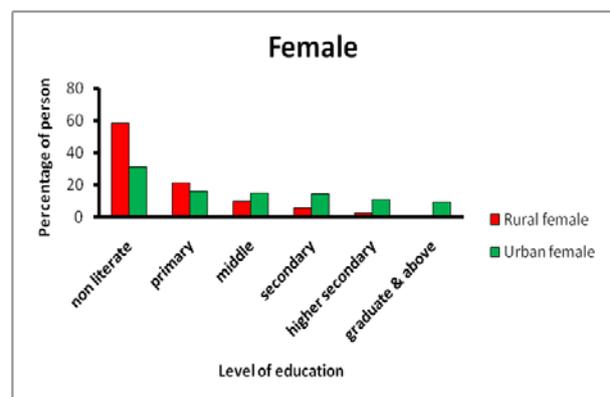


Fig.2 Education level of rural & urban female

Source: Report no. 543 of NSS 66th round

CONCLUSION

Higher education is the key to tribal development. But the tribal students have very low participation in higher education. The country lacks proper achievement of tribal pupils in higher education. The overall tribal scenario of higher education does not match with the global quality standard. So the government should take some drastic steps for their



development. The attitude of parents should be improved through proper counselling. Social security of the tribal girls should be guaranteed by the government. The quality of teaching and integrated service should be imparted. It has been strongly argued that, India has to enhance its priority for higher education among tribal population.

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