



## A Study on the Educational Challenges of the Tribal Community and NEP 2020

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**Abstract:** *The present article aims to throw light on the educational issues and concerns of the tribal community and discuss the government programmes and policies for the educational development of the tribal community. It also highlights the recommendations of the NEP 2020 for tribal education. The present study is a qualitative analysis of Tribal educational challenges and the recommendations of NEP 2020 based on secondary data and information in the form of reviews, books, journals, policy, drafts, internet, etc. The article is descriptive in nature and an amalgamation of related ideas is done to conclude. The study concludes that the tribal students should be encouraged to take education by using both tribal and state languages simultaneously during the pre- primary and primary levels and creating supplementary relevant tribal learning materials.*

**Keywords:** *Educational Issues, Tribal Community, Pandemic Period, Backwardness.*

**Introduction:** Tribes make up a significant portion of India's population for two primary reasons: (a) they account for 8.14% of the country's total population, or 8,45,11,216 people, according to the 2001 census, and (b) they live in unique ecological contexts and practise unique languages, customs, and economic activities. Their geographical seclusion, backwardness, fear of interaction, primitive features, etc., have captivated policymakers since independence. The indigenous peoples have been stereotyped as barbaric and backwards since the 1600s. (Xaxa, 2005) They are called dasyus, daityas, rakshasas, and nishads in ancient Indian literature and history. In addition, this group has been called by a variety of names in anthropological and sociological works, including "backward Hindus", "submerged humanity", "aborigines", and "submerged humanity". (Das & Das 1955; Ghurye 1963; Risley 1903; Elwin 1944). However, according to article 342 of the Indian constitution, these individuals are considered to be Scheduled Tribes.

Communities designated as scheduled under Article 342 of the Indian Constitution are known as scheduled tribes under Article 366(25). Any tribe, tribal community, or subset thereof that the President, by public notice, has designated as a Scheduled Tribe is considered to be a "Tribe" under Article 342 of the Constitution. With the exception of Haryana, Punjab, Chandigarh, and Delhi, every state has Scheduled Tribes inhabitants as per the 2001 Census. In the western part of the country, you can find this concentration in Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttarakhand. In the northeastern part, you can find it in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Manipur, and Nagaland. Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and, to a lesser degree, Andhra Pradesh are hill states in central India where there is another concentration. (Agarwal, 2018) States of Jharkhand and West Bengal are also home to indigenous peoples.

There is no country in the world with a larger tribal population than India. The 2011 census found that this represents 8.6% of the country's overall population. Among the most important drivers of change that contribute to progress is education. In reality, education is a factor in both the economic growth of indigenous people and the development of their inner strength, which helps in overcoming life's new obstacles. Improving current living circumstances or creating better future living conditions is the goal of this action, sequence of acts, or process. (Singh, 2015) Enhancing human endowments, building ability levels, overcoming obstacles, and expanding chances for a sustainable increase in well-being is the single most essential goal that society can strive for. Education, according to Professor Amartya Sen, is a key indicator of inclusive economic development. Therefore, enhancing the Scheduled Tribes' economic and social circumstances may be achieved via education.(Kumar, & Taneja, 2019)

**Significance of the Study:** Personal, societal, and national progress can only be achieved via education. In independent India, several initiatives have been undertaken and implemented throughout the years to improve the educational opportunities for the lower castes. There are a number of obstacles preventing the launch of this programme at the moment. The present COVID-19 pandemic phase has seen the most significant obstacles. Historically economically and socially disadvantaged, the Schedule Tribes became even more so during the COVID-19 epidemic. They can't afford to eat twice a day, much alone dress their children appropriately, and many families have lost their jobs as a result. Having spent so much time at home, the school-aged youngsters of this neighbourhood have completely lost interest in their studies. Along with learning the alphabet, many kids have forgotten a lot. The government's education programme has been significantly impeded by the shutdown of schools and other institutions. Researchers have pointed out a number of problems with tribal education and offered solutions. Through which the execution of the education programme on the boys and girls of the Schedule Tribes is now feasible. Regarding this, this research is noteworthy. Equally important is the fact that it helps ease educational obstacles experienced by other troubled populations, such as Schedule Tribes.

**Educational Issues and Concerns:** Children from indigenous communities have unique challenges in the classroom that stem from low educational standards more generally than from their ethnicity alone. Of course, being tribal also usually implies being impoverished; they live in places where educational opportunities are few. Thus, it's not just that they're tribal; there are a number of connected factors at play. According to research, tribal children have the necessary cognitive abilities and psychological traits to thrive in school. As with non-tribal students, their low achievement levels are thought to be caused by factors related to school (Gautam, 2003; Reported in Bagai and Nundy, 2009, p.11). There are a number of interconnected elements that contribute to the below-average primary education condition in tribal communities and the poor performance of tribal kids. These factors may be roughly categorised into two groups: (i) internal factors and (ii) external ones.

**Internal Factors:** Suitable programmes may address internal variables, which are inherent to the school system's structure and include things like curriculum and pedagogy, teacher attitude and absenteeism, instructional language, incentives, and the community's lack of ownership over education.

**Medium of Instruction:** For indigenous communities, language has always been a barrier to learning. Students from indigenous communities often struggle to understand and participate in school programmes since they are taught in official or regional languages.

**Economic Condition:** Because of their extreme poverty, tribal people have no inclination to invest in their children's education or to use them as a source of cheap labour.

In isolated tribal regions, teacher absenteeism is a common occurrence, which has a significant impact on the quality of education.

**Attitude of the Parents:** The tribal parents would rather have their children work to help support the family financially rather than send them to school since the money they earn from school doesn't come back right away.

**Infrastructural Challenges:** The majority of tribal territories' educational institutions lack adequate physical amenities. Lacking even the most basic hygienic facilities, many institutions are ill-equipped to educate and train their students.

### **Schemes and Programmes for Education of Scheduled Tribes:**

If a civilization or group wants to overcome its disadvantages and become more progressive, education is a must. As a result, the Indian government has made funding for Scheduled Tribe education a top priority. Some of the initiatives that have been put in place to help this marginalised group get an education are detailed below.

**Post-Matric Scholarship Scheme:** The years 1944–1945 saw the launch of this plan. The goal of this programme is to help students from Scheduled Tribes who are enrolled in post-secondary or post-matriculation programmes pay for their studies so that they may graduate. Scholarships are given out by the State or Union Territory government to students from ST backgrounds whose parents' yearly income is Rs 1.08 lakh or less.

**Schemes for construction of hostels for ST Girls and Boys:** Initiation of the ST Girls' Hostel development plan occurred during the Third Plan era. The years 1989–1990 saw the commencement of a distinct plan to build ST Boys. During the 10th Five Year Plan, the two programmes were combined into one. Hostel housing is one way the project plans to help tribal students improve their literacy rates; many of these students come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and live in rural areas, making it impossible for them to continue their education on their own.

**Schemes for the establishment of Ashram School in Tribal Sub-Plan Areas:** The tribal sub plan from 1990–1991 made use of this system. Research has shown that a greater enrollment rate is associated with institutions that provide boarding and lodging (Ayadappanavar, 2003). The plan's stated goal is to increase support for and access to education for students from Scheduled Tribes, particularly PGTs. In order to facilitate study, Ashram Schools provide living amenities for students. This is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme on a cost sharing basis between the Centre and the States.

**Up gradation of merit:** The Post-Matric Scholarship Programme absorbed this previously existing programme with the tenth five-year plan. Its only purpose since then has been to support the PMS. The goal of this programme is to help students from Scheduled Tribes, including PGTs, who are in the eleventh and twelfth grades get a leg up in the competition for college admissions and for senior administrative and technical jobs by giving them a well-rounded education in residential schools. From 2008–2009 onwards, each student would get a revised package grant of Rs 1900/–per year under this initiative. This sum covers incidental expenditures, as well as an honorarium to be given to the principal or experts providing coaching.

**Book Bank:** Funds are offered for the purchasing of books under this initiative in order to lower the drop-out rates of ST students from professional institutions and universities. The federal government will only pay up to the following limit, or the real cost of the set, whichever is lower, when it comes to helping states and territorial administrations set up book banks.

### **NEP 2020: Tribal Education**

Tribal children often find their schooling irrelevant and foreign to their lives culturally and academically. Several programmatic interventions for raising children from the tribe Communities are in place in NEP 2020, and will continue to follow. And special measures need to be taken to ensure that tribal children

benefit from this intervention. According to NEP 2020, special attention will be given reducing inequality in the educational development of SCs and STs. As part of efforts to increase participation in school education, special assistance will be provided through special hostels, bridging courses and tax exemptions and scholarships for deserving and deserving students of the SEDG, particularly at secondary level.(Kaur, & Kaur, 2017) Education, to simplify their access to higher education.

NEP 2020 envisages ensuring equitable access to quality higher education for all students with special focus on SEDGs. Exclusions include a lack of awareness of higher education or higher education opportunities, especially higher education economic opportunity costs, financial barriers, entry, geographic and language barriers, and poor employment opportunities in many higher education programs. And the lack of proper student support system is all the problems that need to be solved. (Murmu, Maroona. 2019). For this objective, all governments and HEIs must take further steps related to higher education. Steps to be taken by the Government and HEIs which are required to solve the problem of students of SEDGs.

- Determine appropriate government funding for SEDG education.
- Make clear goals for higher GER for SEDGs.
- Develop and uphold high quality HEI education in local / Indian language or bilingual.
- Conduct outreach programs with higher education opportunities and scholarships within SEDG.
- Provide additional financial support and scholarships to SEDG in both public and private HEIs.
- Develop and support technology tools for better participation and learning outcomes
- Develop bridge courses for educational disadvantaged students
- Provide socio-psychological and academic support and counseling to all disadvantaged students through counseling and guidance programs.
- Strictly enact all no-discrimination and anti-harassment rules.
- Create institutional development plans that have specific plans to increase participation from SEDG, including but not restricted to the above items.

### **Conclusion:**

Education system is currently designed for the dominant group. There needs to create supportive mechanism that supplement the integration of tribal children into the formal education system. The tribal students should be encouraged to take education by using both tribal and state languages simultaneously during the pre-primary and primary levels and creating supplementary relevant tribal learning materials. In tribal areas various monetary or non-monetary incentives for teachers should be introduced to encourage them to provide effective education to tribal children.

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