

CHILDREN OUT OF SCHOOLS: STATUS OF TRIBAL CHILDREN IN MADHYA PRADESH

Divya K.*

Abstract

Dropout is a serious threat that troubles the primary education system in India. The issue has been studied in India and other developing countries over the past 65 years. School dropouts arise from an accumulation of various risk factors throughout children's schooling. There is no single reason why students drop out of primary school. Official figures indicate that around 30 percent children leave the school drop out before completing even five years of schooling and overall around 50 percent children leave schools without completing the 8 years compulsory schooling period. The states of Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh are amongst the states with the largest percentage of children not attending schools both in 1991 and 2001. There are some common reasons behind the increased rate of dropout: poverty and poor income, limited to access to credit, child labour, and children's and parents' lack of interest in education, negative school climate, lack of community support and so. However, structural inequalities remain as a hidden reason behind dropout in rural and tribal communities in India. In tribal communities, poverty, ignorance, superstition, cultural constraints and gender bias that obstruct schooling. The present study examines the dropout among tribal children from primary schools of Madhya Pradesh. This paper highlights, it is necessary to improve the educational access and reduce the dropout in tribal populated areas in India.

Keywords: Dropout, Primary School, tribal children, structural inequalities, socio-cultural factors, gender bias

*** Faculty Member, Department of Social Work, Indira Gandhi National Tribal University, Amarkantak, Madhya Pradesh**

Introduction

Indian tribal community has undergone various interventional experiments including westernization, hinduisation, modernization, peasantisation, mainstreaming, integration, inclusion, neo-liberalization and so on. Under the constitution of the Republic of India 1950, Tribal became subject to special protective provisions of the nation. As per the Article 341, the majority of tribes were classified into the category of “Scheduled Tribe” and the President of India specified them as, “castes, races or tribes which shall for the purposes of this constitution be deemed to be Scheduled Tribes”. The United Nations Declaration on Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) and National Tribal Policy of India have widely encouraged education of tribal children. However, it could be realized that, the dearth of education is one of the significant reason behind the exploitation and marginalization against tribes in India. The situation of Madhya Pradesh, the state has predominantly tribal population continue to suffer from underdevelopment mainly in the education sector.

Madhya Pradesh is home to the largest number of Scheduled Tribes includes significant tribal population which constitutes of more than one-fourth of its total population and 14.7 percent of India’s total tribal population. There are 705 Scheduled Tribes are notified in 30 states and Union Territories of India. The government of India’s Census states that 10.43 crore tribes constitute 8.6 percent of the total population of India. Tribal community constituted in different part of India. More than half of the Scheduled Tribe population is concentrated in Central part of India, i.e., Madhya Pradesh (14.69%), Chhattisgarh (7.5%), Jharkhand (8.29%), Andhra Pradesh (5.7%), Maharashtra (10.08%), Orissa (9.2%), Gujarat (8.55%) and Rajasthan (8.86%). The other distinct area is the North East (Assam, Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur, Meghalaya, Tripura, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh). Madhya Pradesh consists of 46 recognised Scheduled Tribes and three of them have been identified as ‘Special Primitive Tribal Groups’. Their names are respectively, Gond, Bhil, Baiga, Bhadia (Bhariya), Halba, Kaul, Mariya, Maltoand, Sahariya.

Indeed, education is a tool for the empowerment of marginalized communities. The education system has proved a significant development in India. Hence, the educational and literacy status of Scheduled Tribes is still stagnant, even after several years of independence. Education is an important factor for empowering the socio-economic and political status of marginalized or

backwards communities like STs and SCs. In fact education among tribal children coupled with numerous, serious systemic issues like inadequate infrastructure in the schools, poor functioning of schools, high teacher absenteeism and student's absenteeism, student's dropout, a large number of teacher vacancies, poor quality of education, inadequate funds and so on.

Despite this fact, a structural and historical exploitation and ever-worsening alienation from mainstream education are engulfed the educational process of tribal children. The present study examines the dropout among tribal children from primary schools of Madhya Pradesh. The paper is organised as follows: Section-1 provides a detailed discussion of the educational status of Madhya Pradesh in general and status of tribal school children in particular with facts and figures. Section-2 outlines and dropout issues among tribal children of Madhya Pradesh. This paper highlights, it is necessary to improve the educational access and reduce the dropout in tribal populated areas in India.

Educational Profile of Tribes in Madhya Pradesh

The government of India, Census Report, 2011 reveals the total number of literates in Madhya Pradesh is 4,38,27,193 wherein 1,79,79,056 are females and 2,58,48,137 are males i.e., 70.6 percent. Female and male literacy rates in 2011 are 60.0 percent and 80.5 percent respectively. In Census 2001, Madhya Pradesh stood 24th in the country in literacy whereas in 2011 it has slipped to 28th position, same as in female literacy rate. While comparing the literacy rate of Scheduled Tribes, the LR increased from 8.53 in 1961 to 58.96 percent in India. Considering literacy rate by sex, Bhopal district has the highest female literacy rate (76.6%) whereas Indore district has the highest male literacy rate (89.2%). Alirajpur district has the lowest male literacy rate (43.6%) as well as the lowest female literacy rate (31.0%). It also has the lowest total literacy rate in the country (37.2%).

Literacy Rate of Scheduled Tribes in India (1961-2011)

Year	Male	Female	Total
1961	13.83	3.16	8.54
1971	17.63	4.85	11.39
1981	24.52	8.05	16.35

1991	40.65	18.19	29.60
2001	59.17	34.76	47.10
2011	71.70	54.4	63.1

Source: National Commission for SCs & STs, Fifth Report & Census, 2011

The Census Report of 2011 indicates the susceptible educational status of tribes which is quite uneven among different states of India. The data reveals, states with more number of tribal habitations continue to perform very low. They are Jharkhand (57.1%), Madhya Pradesh (50.6%), Orissa (52.2%), Rajasthan (52.2%), and Andhra Pradesh (49.2%). Whereas, some states with a higher concentration of tribal population has been doing extremely well. They are Mizoram (91.5%), Nagaland (80.0%), Manipur (77.4%), and Meghalaya (74.5%). The state has 105,592 primary schools, 6,352 high schools and 5,161 higher secondary schools. The data reveals, need of serious attention towards the improvement of education and literacy in Madhya Pradesh. Because, many deprived and marginalized communities are inhabited in Madhya Pradesh, who are not able to play a more productive role in society due to lack of education and inaccessibility of education services.

Schooling in Madhya Pradesh

The state shows considerable growth of a number of schools in primary and upper primary schools in recent years. According to District Information system for Education (DISE) statistics, 2011-12, in all 50 districts of MP there are a total of 1, 40, 993 schools of which 1, 1, 2079 are government-run and 27, 148 are privately run. These schools are managed by the government, Local Bodies, Private aided, and Private unaided managements. Out of 1, 40, 993 schools, 92, 053 are primary schools. In 2009-2010, Madhya Pradesh had 105,592 primary schools, 6,352 high schools and 5,161 higher secondary schools. The state has 208 engineering & architecture colleges, 208 management institutes and 12 medical colleges. Below mentioned image (2) explain the detailed statistics of available educational institutions in Madhya Pradesh, 2011-2012.

Image-02: Educational Institutions in Madhya Pradesh, 2011-12

Elementary education	Primary only	Primary with upper primary	upper primary/Sec./H.Sec.	Upper primary only	Upper primary with Sec./H.Sec.	Total
schools(current year)	92053	16483	2483	29781	193	140993
Government schools	83407	75	39	28530	28	112079
Private schools	7542	15796	2419	1226	165	27148
Unrecognised schools	1104	612	25	25	0	1766
Govt. schools rural	79149	12	10	26349	20	105540
Private schools rural	5020	7685	707	595	56	14063

Image -02: State Elementary Education Report Card:-2011-2012

The state has initiated to establish alternative primary educational institutions in addition to formal elementary schools. This alternative mechanism ensures the accessibility of education that benefits to students from all spheres of society.

Students Enrollment in Madhya Pradesh

Enrollment of students in the schools of Madhya Pradesh rose in primary classes and reduced in upper primary classes. On the other hand, students enrollment is higher in private schools than government schools in rural areas. Similarly, enrollment is higher in private upper primary schools than government schools. Total 1,98,005 students enrolled in private schools and 3485 of them in government schools.

Image-03: Students Enrollment in Madhya Pradesh, 2011-12

Enrollment Institutions	Primary Schools	Primary with Upper Primary Schools	Primary with UP & Sec./H S etc.	Upper Primary Schools	Upper Primary with sec./H.S ec/	Total
Enrollment in Govt. Schools	6822302	27482	25538	3340399	5495	10221216
Enrollment in Private Schools	78673	3162622	808526	146346	19345	4920512

Enrollment in Rural Govt. Schools	6242305	2810	3485	2953970	4175	9206747
Enrollment in Private Schools	415519	1316163	198005	57469	3864	1991020
Total Enrollment	8294301	304021	733390	3395435	30452	15493689

Source- Elementary Education in India: Progress towards UEE Analytical Tables 2011-12

School Enrollment ratio of socially and economically disadvantaged group determines the exclusion and equity aspects of the education of the state. Madhya Pradesh, as a most educationally backward state, the state education report of Madhya Pradesh 2011-12 data reveals, SC enrolment at the elementary level is nearly 17 percent in Madhya Pradesh, the proportion of ST enrolment is 24 percent. The state has a high proportion of OBC population and proportion of OBC enrolment is 42 percent. Accordingly, the primary enrolment levels of SC and ST children account for 20 percent and 11 percent respectively to total enrollment; it reduces to 18 percent and 9 percent respectively at the upper primary level. In 2011-12, the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of Scheduled Caste student's for classes I-V, VI-VIII, IX-X and XI-XII are 122.6, 90.5, 73.7 and 48.2. Respectively, GER of Scheduled Tribe from classes I-V, VI-VIII, IX-X and XI-XII are 116.7, 75.5, 53.8 and 32.3.

Enrollment of Scheduled Tribe Children in School Education of Madhya Pradesh-2011-12

Classes	Boys	Girls	Total
Class-I	350179	315834	666013
Class-II	310379	297494	607873
Class-III	277519	278446	555965
Class-IV	253889	256114	510003
Class-V	222707	232218	454925
Class-VI	177530	188932	366462
Class-VII	159823	165107	324930
Class-VIII	130109	125099	255208
Class-IX	110474	66410	176881

Class-X	89821	49623	139444
Class-XI	58261	40678	98939
Class-XII	55087	38714	93801
Classes I-V	1414673	1380106	2794779
Classes-VI-VII	467462	479138	946600
Classes-I-VIII	1882135	1859244	3741379
Classes-IX-X	200292	116033	316325
Classes-I-X	2082427	1975277	4057704
Classes-XI-XII	113348	79392	192740
Classes-I-XII	2195775	2054669	4250444
Open School	906	500	1406

Source: Statistics of School Education 2011-12, Government of India

Nationally, the enrolment in primary education is constant in many States and reducing in some of the States. The reason for the decline in enrollment in primary schools is a decline of child population age 0-6 years. According to Census of India, 2001 & 2011 Child population (0-6 years) declined by 5.05 million between 2001 and 2011. School enrolment of tribal children shows a considerable increase in 2011-12. The significant role of Sarva Shika Abhiyan has made diverse intervention strategies to enhance the enrollment of tribal children. The opening of neighbourhood schools, transportation, escort and residential facilities as per need, free textbooks and uniforms, Mid-Day Meal, curricular adaptation for inclusion, pedagogic reforms has designed and implemented for the enhancement of primary and upper primary education of ST children.

Dropout among Tribal Children

By understanding the vulnerability of tribal community, Government of India has initiated a host of inclusive schemes and programmes exclusively for educational as well as the total development of tribes. After the enactment of Constitution of India, Article 45 in the Directive Principles of the Constitution “the State shall endeavour to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of this constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen”. The largest proportion of various centrally sponsored

programmes, incentive government schemes aimed to remove or reduce the dropout problem at the elementary stages of education. Mid-day meals, free supply of textbooks, provision of free uniforms to needy children, no detention policy' at the primary stage, schooling facilities within easy walking distance from the homes of children, creation of necessary infrastructure of facilities in schools scholarships to girls and scholarships to children belonging to weaker sections of the society manages to reduce the dropout problem in some extent.

However, the present dropout figures of tribal children show a considerable increase of dropout of tribal children. It invites the need of crucial effort for the education of tribal children in India as well as Madhya Pradesh. The state has enriched with a diversity of population with more than half of tribal population constitutes i.e., 14.69 percent. The state is India's second largest state comprises of 51 districts, 342 Tehsils, 313 Community Development Blocks, 476 towns and 54,903 villages (as per Census, 2011). Moreover, the land enhanced with diverse forest resources with 77,522 sq. km which is around one-fourth of the states geographical area.

UNESCO's remarkable world survey (1980) on drop-out has brought serious attention towards school dropout. UNESCO defines "a drop-out can be defined as a child who enrolls in school but fails to complete the relevant level of the educational cycle". Drop-out is construed as that component where children who enrol themselves in schools and colleges withdraw prematurely before they complete the stage. The dropout rate of children's coming from poor families is on an average four (4) times higher than that of the children's coming from rich families (NCAER 1994). This gap is too large in rural areas than in urban areas.(The World Bank Report, 1996). Dropout is closely associated with sex, gender, caste and socio-economic conditions of children. Image 05 shows the dropout rate among tribal children in India from first to the tenth standard of schooling.

Image-05: Dropout among Tribal Children in India

Classes	Boys	Girls	Total
Class-1-V	40.6	33.3	37.1
Class-I-VIII	38.6	33.4	36.1
Class-1-X	58.7	71.9	64.6

Source: Government of India. (2014) Statistics of School Education 2010-11. Ministry of Human Resource Development Bureau of Planning, Monitoring & Statistics, New Delhi.

Below mentioned image six (6) shows the figures of dropout in Madhya Pradesh in 2011-12. As per the data, class I to Vth standard dropout among tribal girls and boys stated as 37.1. Compare to girls, boy's dropout is higher in the year of 2011 in India. Class I to VIIIth standard dropout is 36.1 percent. Class Ist to Xth is 64.6 percent. The dropout rate among children belonging to scheduled tribes is highest than the general population. The reasons behind highest rate of dropout among tribal children includes, poverty, poor socio-economic conditions, inaccessibility for good educational institutions, absence of nursery schools, lack of awareness about advantage and utility of education, medium of instruction, lack of sufficient infrastructure facilities and teaching aids, lack of qualified and committed teachers, lack residential schools, poor health condition of children, and local cultural traditions.

Image-06: Dropout among Tribal Children in Madhya Pradesh (2011-12)

Classes	Boys	Girls	Total
Class-1-V	31.7	23.5	27.8
Class-I-VIII	61.4	57.3	59.5
Class-1-X	55.4	71.7	63.0

Source: Government of India. Statistics of School Education 2011-12.

The graphical representation of above-mentioned data explains the percent of dropout of tribal children from Madhya Pradesh, 2011-12 years. Compare to Ist to Vth standard, the dropout rate is high in Ist to VIIIth standard. Class Ist to Xth shows that 63.0 percent of dropout among tribal children. Compare to boys, dropout is high among girls. It is a critical indicator reflects lack of educational development and poor access to a socially excluded group to complete a basic level of education. While understanding this phenomenon, there is no single reason behind dropout. Undoubtedly, most of the tribal children are first generation learners. Therefore, teachers in tribal populated schools should be more child-sensitive and child-friendly. Indeed, before dropout, children may show withdrawal symptoms like absenteeism, lack of interest to attend the classes, shows isolated nature and so on. Community intervention is highly necessary to retrieve the dropout among tribal children. Because, the dropout problem is closely associated with three

main factors includes family, schools and communities. Early intervention against dropout can come down the dropout rate among tribal children. The help of civic groups, social workers and NGO's can utilize to create a local plan to detect the dropout in tribal belt zones.

State- wise dropout rates are shown table 2.14. In the Class I-V and Class I-VIII, the maximum Dropout is in the state of Meghalaya - 54.6 and 73.8 respectively. Among girls, the Drop-out Rates in 2010- 11 was highest in the state of Odisha followed by the state of Meghalaya and Madhya Pradesh. Among boys, it was highest in the state of Odisha followed by the state of Meghalaya and Jharkhand.

Conclusion

Children out of schools can create profound and prolonged effects on student's life especially among tribal children. Because, tribal social life undergoing several hardships, exploitation and suffering. If the tribal children failed to undergo the formal schooling education, they may lose the battle to gain a dignified social life in the contemporary society. Kothari has rightly said "The destiny of India is being shaped in its classroom". Education provides not only employability for individuals, it helps to create a balanced life with creative ideas, perspectives, assist them to keep away from social issues etc. Unquestionably, inclusive growth is not possible without formally educate the tribes in India. Therefore, central and state governments have a major responsibility to increase the allocation of educational funds for dropout removal programmes in tribal populated zones. Indeed, a nation cannot ensure the constitutional guaranteed equality and justice thoughts without achieving an appropriate educational status among tribes.

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