

**A STUDY OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AMONG TRIBAL AND NON-TRIBAL
ADOLESCENTS OF INDIA**

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This paper explored the academic achievement of tribal and non-tribal adolescent students' in secondary schools of Kashmir division. Sample was comprised of 564 students randomly selected from three secondary schools. Academic achievement was obtained from the school records of the sample students. Gender wise and category wise comparisons were done using mean, S.D. and independent samples t-test. Results showed that tribal and non-tribal adolescents differ significantly on the measure of academic achievement at 0.001 level. Nontribal adolescents were found to have a higher level of academic achievement than tribal students. The study also revealed that there is no significant difference between male and female adolescents on the measure of academic achievement.

Introduction

Indian society is highly stratified on the basis of caste hierarchy, religious affiliation, linguistic diversity and regional loyalty. The Scheduled Tribe population represents one of the most economically impoverished and marginalized groups in India. Although Scheduled Tribes are a minority, they constitute 8.6 % of the total population in India (Census of India, 2011). In the state of Jammu and Kashmir tribal population, comprise of 12 unique Scheduled Tribes (ST) whose livelihoods are also varied. The Scheduled Tribes are not discriminated against in the same way by the mainstream Hindu population as the Scheduled Caste population in India. While the latter group belongs to the lowest hierarchy of social order and is often considered impure or unclean, the Scheduled Tribes have, for the most part, been socially distanced and living outside the mainstream Hindu society. The areas inhabited by the tribal population constitute a significant part of the underdeveloped areas of the country. Scheduled Tribe population represents one of the most economically impoverished and marginalized groups in India. Though the Indian government has been making concerted efforts since independence to bridge the socio-economic gap between the advantaged and disadvantaged groups, STs have remained socially, economically, culturally and educationally backward because of their specific occupational and geographical condition.

Education has been recognised as a powerful tool for upward social mobility, which can help to build an inclusive society by reducing socio-economic imbalances. Several attempts have been

made to empower weaker sections of the society, including: provision of constitutional safeguards, scholarships and “free-ships” (fees are waived and free books, stationery and midday meals are provided); reservation of seats in government jobs and educational institutions; and special coaching classes to prepare students for competitive tests. Available data indicate that even after 60 years of affirmative action, participation of the STs in higher education still does not match their share in the total population.

National Policy of Education (1986 and revised Policy in 1992) suggested the following programmes for education of tribal people.

- I. Opening primary schools in Tribal Areas.
- II. Need to develop curricula of their language.
- III. Promoting schedule tribes youth to work as teachers.
- IV. Ashram schools, Residential schools should be established in large scale in Tribal areas.
- V. Incentives to encourage their life style through education.

Academic achievement is the ability to learn and incorporate in behaviour at respective levels of the standard. It also denotes the knowledge attained and skill developed in the school curriculum. A reliable indicator of achievement and learning outcomes is a child is learning effectively, acquiring knowledge and skills, and growing socially and morally (Aggarwal,2000; Govinda, 2002). According to Li (2007) in most countries males had significantly higher average marks than females in both mathematical literacy and in advanced mathematics in the final years of secondary school. The analysis of the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) confirms the findings on skill-related gender differences for younger students (Mullis, 2007). Moreover, recent studies show that gender disparities in education have been changing in favour of girls, both in terms of participation and performance (Jha and Kelleher, 2006). Vijayalaxmi and Natesan (1992) studied factors influencing academic achievement and their findings showed that girls had a higher mean academic achievement compared to boys. Among various empirical studies conducted regarding academic achievement of tribals, research by Sujatha (1987) and Govinda (2002) suggests that tribal children do possess the basic cognitive abilities and psychological dispositions for successful participation in schools. In a study conducted by Jabbi and Rajalakshmi (2001), it was found that most of the tribal children have cognitive abilities desirable for educational development irrespective of age and sex. In spite of this, studies on learning achievements of tribal children, both girls and boys at primary classes have shown lower levels of achievements as compared to non-tribals (Singh 1996). The objectives of the study were: to study the academic achievement of tribal and non-tribal adolescent students of Kashmir, to study the academic achievement gender and category wise and to suggest appropriate strategies for improvement in academic achievement.

Hypotheses

- ✚ There is no significant mean difference between tribal and non-tribal adolescents of Kashmir on academic achievement.
- ✚ There is no significant mean difference between male and female adolescents of Kashmir on academic achievement.
- ✚ There is no significant mean difference between tribal male and tribal female adolescents of Kashmir on academic achievement.
- ✚ There is no significant mean difference between non-tribal male and non-tribal female adolescents of Kashmir on academic achievement.

The sample of the research study included tribal and non-tribal adolescent (male/female) students of 9th class in Government schools of Anantnag and Kupwara Districts of Kashmir India, during the academic year of 2013-14. The investigator visited the educational institutions of district Anantnag and Kupwara and collected the data through stratified random sampling technique. The total number of 564 students was selected out of which 286 adolescents belonged to tribal and 278 belonged to non-tribal communities. The sample was collected by using stratified random sampling technique. The academic achievement in this research study was percentage of final annual marks. In order to analyze the data in the light of the objectives and hypotheses framed for this study the mean, SD and independent samples t-tests, were applied.

Conclusion:

The Government of India has repeatedly acknowledged the disadvantaged status of the tribal communities in education and recognized the need to address it. Several initiatives like Madhyamik Siksha Kendra, Siksha Bondhu, School Inspectors, Village Education Communities, etc., have been implemented to make Universal Elementary Education a success. This study has examined the academic achievement of tribal and non-tribal adolescents of Kashmir. It has been found that the tribal and non-tribal adolescents differ significantly on the measure of academic achievement. Non-tribal adolescents showed a higher level of academic achievement than tribal students. There was no significant mean difference between male and female students. Further the study revealed that there existed no significant difference between the tribal male/female and non-tribal male/female adolescent students. In order to enhance academic achievement of tribal there is urgent need of construction more primary schools. Involving tribal parents in the monitoring processes. In the process of mainstreaming the tribal children in society, tribal dialect may be used as a medium for tribal children for the first few years and gradually introducing the state language. Community awareness and community mobilization, which are its core elements, should receive adequate attention.

References:

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