

EDUCATION AMONG SCHEDULED TRIBES AND SCHEMES IN KERALA

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I. INTRODUCTION

Education in the present day context is perhaps the single most important means for individuals to improve personal endowments, build capacity levels, overcome constrain, and in the process enlarge their available set of opportunities and choices for a sustained improvement in wellbeing. From April 1, 2010 the Right to Education has come into force ensuring free education to more than 92 lakh out-of-school children in India. This Act gives every child the right to a quality elementary education. The main features of the Act are:

- All children aged 6-14 shall have the right to free and compulsory education at a neighbourhood school.
- No direct (school fees) or indirect costs on uniforms, textbooks, mid-day meals, transportation etc need to be borne by the child or parents to obtain elementary education.
- The GOVT will provide schooling free of cost until the child's elementary education is completed.
- All schools must comply with certain infrastructure and teacher norms. Two trained teachers will be provided for every 60 students at the primary level.
- Schools shall constitute School Management Committees comprising local officials, parents, guardians and teachers. The SMCs will monitor utilization of GOVT grants and the school environment.
- RTE mandates inclusion of 50% women and parents of children from disadvantaged groups in SMCs.

As literacy development is concerned; Kerala has the distinction of being a historic state in India so far. Kerala's literacy rate is comparable to the most advanced regions of the world. Kerala's literacy rate which was only 47.18% in 1951 has almost doubled to 93.91% in 2011. The male, female literacy gap which was 21.92% in 1951 has narrowed down to 4.04% in 2011. District wise analysis of Kerala's literacy rate according to 2011 census shows that Pathanamthitta district (96.93) has the highest literacy rate in the state followed by Kottayam (96.40) and Alappuzha(96.26) districts. Palakkad district has the lowest literacy rate in the state (88.49). Malappuram District has the largest number of schools (1472nos) in the state followed by Kannur (1293nos) and Kozhikode Districts (1237nos). Malappuram District has also the largest number of government (543 nos) and unaided schools (145 nos) in the state. But largest number of aided schools is functioning in Kannur district (967 nos). Enrolment of students in the state has been showing a slight decline in the recent years. Girl students constitute 49.26% of the total student enrolment in schools.

The backwardness in education is an important cause for economic backwardness. It is in the light of this fact, the Central and State Governments attach greater importance to scheduled tribes for their education. Major part of the money set apart for economic development is being spent on education.

II. EDUCATION AMONG SCHEDULED TRIBES

The constitution of India, in Article 366, has defined the Scheduled Tribes as such of those tribes or tribal communities which have been so declared by the Constitution Order under Article 342 for the purpose of Constitution. There are 574 tribal groups who have been identified as Scheduled Tribe. Lack of education of tribes has inevitably linked it to their poor economic condition and poverty.

As per the figures of 2011-12 census, SC students constitute 11.04% of total students in the state. The percentage of SC students, government schools, private aided schools and private unaided schools are 13.82%, 10.73% and 3.73% respectively. ST students constitute 1.86% of total enrolment in schools in the year 2011-12. The percentage of ST students in government schools, private aided schools and private unaided schools are 3.37%, 1.33% and 0.37% respectively in 2011-12. The drop out ratio of ST students was 2.33%. The pass percentage of SC students also increased from 50.80% to 60.46% and ST students from 41.16% to 52.31% during 2010-11. 2882 Scheduled Tribe students were enrolled for courses in arts and science colleges in 2010-11. The enrolment of ST students in degree and post graduate courses are 2528 and 354 respectively. Girls constitute 60% of total ST students in Arts and Science colleges.

III. PROBLEMS OF TRIBAL EDUCATION

The reasons for this can be categorized as external, internal, and socio-economic and psychological. The external constraints are related to problems and difficulties at levels of policy, planning, implementation, and administration. Internal constraints refer to problems associated with the school system, content, curriculum, medium of instruction, pedagogy, academic supervision, monitoring, and teacher-related problems. The third set of problems relates to social, economic, and cultural background of tribes and psychological problems of learners.

External Constraints

One of the major constraints of tribal education at planning level is the adoption of a dual system of administration i.e. planning of tribal welfare department and education department. In formulating policies and programmes for tribal education it is essential to understand the complex realities of tribal life and the expectation of tribes from the system. Under the system of dual administration, absence of coordination as well as inadequate scope for reciprocal use of respective expertise and experiences between the two departments has invariably stunted educational development among tribes.

Internal Constraints

A majority of schools in tribal areas are without basic infrastructure facilities. Normally, school buildings in tribal areas have thatched roofs, dilapidated walls, and non-plastered floors, large number of tribal schools do not have teaching-learning materials, or even blackboards, lack of minimum sanitary provisions. In tribal areas the opening of a school is equated with the posting of a teacher and same is the case with 'ashram' schools. It is found that in most of ashram schools which are residential in nature, there is no space for the children to sleep. It is not uncommon to find that many children studying in ashram schools are afflicted with contagious diseases like scabies and diarrhea, leading to high drop-out rates. Schools in tribal areas just function with bare minimum facilities. The uniform structure and transaction of curriculum has put tribal children at a disadvantage. In respect of pedagogy, it has been found that the rigid systems of formal schooling, which emphasize discipline, routine norms, teacher-centered instruction, etc. have made the children wary of school. Inability to establish a communication link with the teacher and this is reflected in low attendance and high dropout rates.

Socio-economic and Cultural Constraints

In a broad sense, these socio-economic and cultural factors can be outlined as poverty and poor economic conditions, social customs, cultural ethos, tribal language, lack of awareness and understanding of the value of formal education, conflict and gap between the home and school, etc. Participation of children in family income directly or indirectly, inadequate coverage, reach, and quality of incentives, lack of timely availability of incentives limits the education of ST children's.

IV. SCHEDULED TRIBES DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Some of the assistance from Department of Scheduled Tribes Development is as follows:

1. Balavadis

Under this scheme 43 Balavadis were set up. This excludes the Balavadis run by Social Welfare Department. The scheme is meant to develop aptitude in learning; to encourage children for accelerating the development of their intellectual capacity to make them strongly attached to hygienic circumstances.

2. Nursery Schools/ Single Teacher Schools

The Scheduled Tribe Development Department runs 14 Nursery Schools and 12 Single Teacher Schools. The children studying in Nursery Schools are given, free mid day meals and dress in addition to lump sum grant. Admission is being given to children of 3a to 5 years old. The Single Teacher Schools set up with the intention of creating awareness about education, health and cleanliness of the surroundings among the scheduled tribes, especially among those who dwell in forlorn areas and spread education among their children.

3. Educational facilities up to the High School level

Apart from giving full fee concession to all scheduled tribe students, lump sum grant and special stipend are also being given to them. In the case of students who fail in the final examinations of one class are being given half the amount of lump sum grants. They are also being offered all other concessions in full. Special care is being taken to distribute the lump sum grant before the end of the first month after the opening of the school.

4. Hostel facilities

One hundred and eleven pre-metric hostels and 3 G.R.B schools are being run to help the education of scheduled tribes' students. It is those students who do not stay within reasonable distance from the schools are the beneficiaries. 30 students are given accommodation in each hostel. On the basis of available space, more students are admitted to hostels. In the hostels 10% of accommodation is being reserved for students of other communities. The inmates are provided with free meals, two pairs of dress in a year, educational aids and notebooks. Hostels functions under the supervision of a warden, assisted by other employees, watchmen, cooks etc. In order to provide the students with assistance to learn comparatively difficult subjects, facility for private tuition also is arranged. Until now there are only 33 hostels with permanent buildings. Strenuous efforts are being made to construct permanent buildings for the hostels which are now in rented buildings. In the Scheduled Tribes Centres, where schools run by the education department, 3 G.R.B schools with facility for primary education are also function. Approximately 6000 students have been provided with accommodation in one hundred and eleven hostels and 3 G.R.B schools.

5. Financial assistance for Boarding

The Scheduled Tribes students who seek admission in Boarding are being paid Rs.200/- per month apart from free uniform clothes.

6. Grant to Parents

The parent who send his/her kid regularly to school will get an annual grant of Rs. 100/-

7. Promotional Prize to students

Students who get either 45% or higher marks in the 8th and the 9th class are given RS 50 and those who get 45% or more mark in the 10th class examination, are given RS 200 as encouragement grant. Students who pass the S.S.L.C, +2, Degree examinations in the first class are offered RS 2500, 3000, 3500 respectively as encouragement for further studies. In addition to the above, encouragement is being given to 20 students in a district who pass the S.S.L.C examination with high marks at the rate of RS 1500 in the case of the Malappuram, Waynad and Palakkad districts, and in the case of other districts same amount is given to 10 students each. In the case of +2 and Degree students 5 students each, who have scored highest marks from Wayanad, Palakkad and Malappuram districts are offered an award of Rs.2000; in the case of the other districts 2 students each are given RS 2500 as encouragement.

8. Assistance for study at Tutorials

Students who fail in the S.S.L.C examinations are given assistance in the following manner Lump sum grant RS 100 Monthly Stipend RS 600 (60 x 10) Tuition fees RS 450 Assistance is being made available to students who fail in +2 examinations also.

9. Enhanced assistance to capable students

50 students selected from among those of 4th class on the basis of the marks scored by them and they are sent to eminent residential schools. Under this scheme the total expenditure on account of tuition fee, residential facilities, boarding, dress and educational aids is met by the Government.

10. Educational Recreation Centres

Educational recreation centres are being run in the scheduled tribes residential centres. These centres are being provided with furniture, books, newspapers and recreational aids.

11. Bharatha Darsan / Kerala Darsan

30 boys who score high marks in S.S.L.C examination are selected for Bharath Darsan programme of 20 days whereas 30 girls students are selected for Kerala Darsan programme.

12. Encouragement in athletics and art forms

Prizes are given to scheduled tribes students who score victories in art and sports activities at the state level in the following manner. Who get the first and second places at the state level competitions; prizes are given at the rate of RS 400 and RS 300. For district level winners RS 300 to RS 500 is offered. Apart from this, scheduled tribes students are admitted in the sports hostels run by Scheduled Caste development Department and further training in arts & sports is imparted.

13. Model Residential Schools

In order to provide high quality education to students belonging to scheduled tribes, model residential schools have been opened, one at Nallurnadu in Wayanad for boys and another at Kattela in Thiruvananthapuram for girls. A maximum of 30 students are benefited by this provision by which 27 students from among the schedule cast and scheduled Tribe candidates and three from other candidates belonging to other communities are selected on the basis of a state level admission test. Thus total of 30 students are given admission in these schools. There is a proposal to start more schools of this kind.

14. Rajiv Gandhiji Memorial Asram School

Rajiv Gandhi Memorial Asram School has been started in Noolpuzha Panchayath in Wayanad district, with the purpose of giving accommodation and coaching belonging to efficient tribal students. Such schools will be established in Malappuram district also. Every year 30 boys and girls are admitted to the first year class of the school.

15. Provision for Clothing

Every year 2 pairs of uniform is given to each student belonging to lower primary classes of the tribal schools.

16. College Education

Students of the scheduled tribes are being exempted from paying fees including the examination fee. In addition to the above, they are given lumpsum grant and monthly stipend at various rates. The stipend for first 4 months is given as advance immediately after the college opening, in view of the possible delay in scrutinizing the applications. In order to providing adequate hostel facilities to students, admission is given to them in cosmopolitan hostels and other recognized hostels.

17. Programmes for Training in Job

In order to make increased employment facilities scheduled tribes students 26 employment training centres have been established for their benefits under the employment authorities. The period of training is two years. 12 young men are given training at a time. The trainees are being given RS 200 per month in the first year and RS 150 in the second year as lump sum grant; they are also given RS 150 per month as stipend. The materials required for training purposes is also given. There is a proposal to expand the training schools by adding new courses in consultation with N.C.V.T.

18. Production Training Centres

There are 3 production training centres under the department. It is proposed to appoint 12 specially trained persons in the centres in addition to 6 skilled workers. The trainees are being given lump sum grants and monthly stipend. The skilled workers are being given remuneration in proportion to the work done by them.

19. Financial assistance for appearing for interview

Travelling allowance will be given to the candidates who appear for interviews conducted against vacancies in the central and state government services. They are paid either the exact bus fare or second class train charges.

20. Pre-Examination Training Centres

For training candidates for appointment to the vacancies notified by the Kerala Public Service Commission, Union Public Service Commission, Banks and other institutions of public sector; 3 Pre-Examination Training Centres are functioning in Thiruvananthapuram, Ernakulam and Kozhikode districts. The candidates are given monthly stipend for this training. Applications for this are to be submitted to the principals of the centres in prescribed forms.

21. Technical Training In Private Institutes

Monthly fee concessions and stipend are made available for Scheduled Tribes candidates studying in private institutes giving technical training courses.

22. Employment Oriented Education and Other Technical Training

10% of seats available in all ITIs in the state are reserved for scheduled tribes and scheduled castes candidates. In addition to fee concessions, lump sum grant and monthly stipend are given, Training is given in motor driving, Autorikshaw driving and Tractor driving etc.

23. Self Employment

Candidates who have undergone training in technical subjects are being given financial assistance for self employment to the tune of RS 3000. The Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes Development Corporation are carrying out various projects in this connection.

24. Assistance for AMRID

To find out training for self-employment, vocational training, camps of leadership training and providing tutorial facilities for students failing in S.S.L.C and +2 examinations etc. have been taken up along with efforts to undertake various development activities for the young men and women belonging to Wayanad district. The Ambedkar Memorial Rural Institute for Development (A.M.R.I.D) at Kalpetta is being given assistance for various above said development activities.

25. Mahila Samajams

In order to develop social leadership qualities and organizational skills, financial assistance is given for organizing Mahila Samajams which work for the development among young women belonging to scheduled tribes. The maximum assistance is Rs.5000.

26. District /State Level Youth Festival

District and State level youth festivals are organized every year with the participation of young women and men who have aptitude for sports and arts. The programmes are organized with due importance to traditional art forms.

27. Mobile Employment Exchanges

In order to give information regarding the employment opportunities arising in government and non - government institutions and for enabling registration in employment exchanges and to ensure the maximum number of employment to the scheduled tribes, one mobile employment exchange is functioning at Mananthavadi and another at Thodupuzha.

28. Special Central Assistance

Training schemes are implemented for educated young men and women for securing employment under special central assistance.

29. Educational Assistance

Students submit application for educational assistance except the students studying up to the S.S.L.C. The school authorities should examine the official documents, prepare the list of schedule tribe students in the prescribed forms and submit it to the concerned Tribal Development Officer. The Scheduled Tribe Development Officer/Projects Officer

examines the application and approves an acceptable list of candidates and give to the school authorities. The school authority draws the amount from the treasury and distributes it to the students.

V. CONCLUSION

In an economy dominated by struggle for survival, options are limited. Since education does not provide any visible and immediate benefit and tribes do not see beyond their present state, the participation of tribal children in education also becomes limited. In price rising world the schemes are insufficient to the development of tribal education. So the government should plan the policies that help the people to overcome the present state and should analyze the result of the policies.

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