

# Towards a Culture Friendly Curriculum for Tribes: A Review of Tribal Studies

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**Abstract:** The scheduled tribes are one of the principal categories of society. Educating tribes at their own pace can bring changes in their sociocultural environment. The aim of this study is to review literatures based on tribal studies and analyzing the need for a culture friendly curriculum for tribal students. The studies are categorized on the basis of problems and challenges faced by tribal students, emotional problems of tribal students, programs and policies for tribal education and teaching methods for tribal students. The problems and the reasons for drop out of tribal children suggest the need for counselling. It is found that curriculum content is irrelevant for tribes' way of life and suggested for the inclusion of local content. It was also suggested for the use of tribal language for the classroom transactions. Students level of academic motivation has been found increasing by the introduction of environment friendly atmosphere for curriculum transaction.

**Keyterms:** Tribes, Culture, Curriculum, Studies.

## INTRODUCTION

India is a pluralist country with rich diversity of cultures, religions, languages and racial stocks. The scheduled tribes are one of the principal categories of the backward classes or historically disadvantaged bottom group of society. Even though tribal communities are rich in culture and heritage, they are socially deprived. Social and economical backwardness is a major issue faced by tribes in India. Several policies and programs have been implemented for tribal upliftment. After six decades of development also, it has not been achieved. Educating tribes at their own pace can bring changes in their socio cultural environment. Policies, five year plans, programs everything has been formulated since independence. But its effective implementation is not becoming practical.

Earlier tribal studies were presented as a part of anthropology. It has been developed as an interdisciplinary subject now a days. Each and every research being conducted in this field is for the evaluation of the progress of tribes and to understand the major problems faced by them. It will educate the mass against the misconceptions about tribes and their prevailing culture. A scientific and systematic method of tribal study can only provide reasonable solutions for their problems. It ensures analysis of the tribal issues and progress from the root.

While reviewing literatures based on tribal education, problems and challenges have been addressed a lot. Studies based on mental health, programs and policies for the development of tribes are also available. Findings of most of the studies shows that tribal students lack interest to attend schools and the main reason is the lack of proper curriculum creating readiness in tribal students. They are facing emotional problems while confronting the main stream education. Only a few studies have been noticed for a well planned teaching method or methodology for teaching tribes. But it has been found that curriculum based on their cultural diversity has created interest in them.

## METHODS ADOPTED FOR THE STUDY

While reviewing the literature based on tribal students, the investigators have gone through many journals, articles and PhD thesis available in online (2016-2022). The investigators have selected 12 studies for this paper and categorized it under four areas viz,

- Problems and challenges faced by tribal students.
- Emotional problems of tribal students.
- Programs and policies for tribal education.
- Teaching methods for tribal students.

The percentage of each category is given in figure 1.

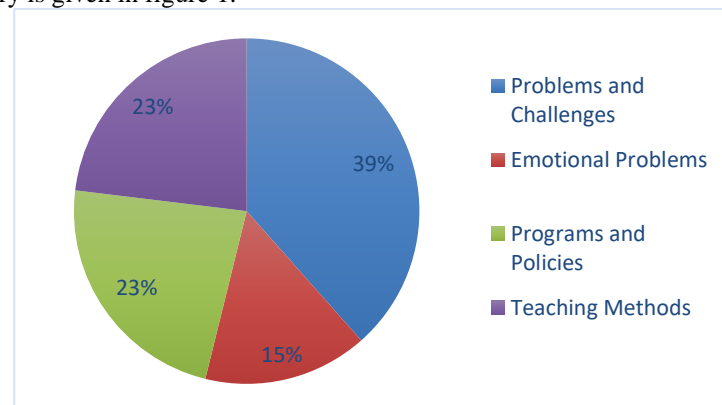


Figure1: Distribution of articles by categories

### ***Major findings and suggestions of the articles reviewed***

To understand the problems and challenges faced by tribal students in a general, five different articles were reviewed.

A study on problems and challenges of tribal adolescents in Kerala gives a clear cut picture of the problems and the sociocultural environment of tribal adolescents in Kerala. Problem of growing up, requirement of adequate knowledge in adolescents, educational problems, scholastic and co scholastic issues, social and religious rigidity, opportunities to cope up with present situation, problems of getting apt employment, social exclusion and inability to live with mainstream society are referred in this study clearly (Chandran, 2016)

An article published on Indian journal on applied research, empowerment of tribal children of Attappady focused on various educational availability for tribal children. The findings included the problems and the reasons for drop out of tribal children. It suggested the need of counselling for the students development. (Thangadurai, 2015)

The lives of tribal children at school milieu in Kerala examined the inclusive properties of school interactional milieu shape social identity and participation of tribal children. The study suggested for the cooperative attitude of teachers towards inclusive education for mainstreaming of tribal students (Dr. Justin P Jose, 2016).

An article published on international journal of novel research in education and learning also focused on the tribal education in India. status, challenges and issues of tribal education were included in brief. Internal and external factors such as language of instruction, curriculum content, pedagogy, community programs e. t. c. were discussed in the study. (Upmanyu, 2016)

There are multiple issues and challenges faced by tribal students. Issues and challenges of school education faced by tribal students in India, found that curriculum content is irrelevant for tribes' way of life and suggested for the inclusion of local content. It was also suggested for the use of tribal language for the classroom transactions. (Ottaplackal & Anbu, 2022)

Emotional well being and lack of motivation have been found as a major reason for the drop out of tribal children. Without reviewing such studies a review paper on tribal education will not be complete. Here I have included two such studies.

Adjustment of tribal students in schools problems and perspectives is an article published in international journal for humanities and science. Poor academic performance and increasing dropout rates are still the problem faced. It is found that tribal children are facing adjustment problems because they are being forced to sit in an environment totally different from their culture and society. (Shelly, 2017)

Influence of mental health on academic performance of paniya tribal students finds the drawbacks of present education system. It is not giving any importance to their culture and tradition. This study suggested that educational activities given to the tribal students should be cultural friendly in order to enhance their self esteem and also to provide balanced diet for their cognitive development. (Joseph, 2017)

I have gone through the policies and programs by the government for eradication of troubles faced by the tribes. Review of three articles related to the policies of government are including in this paper.

Tribal education and government interventions published in research gate was reviewed. More than ten articles in the Indian constitution for tribal education is mentioned in the study. The right to education act, different committees, scholarships available e. t. c. are also described. (Andrabi, 2018)

Under utilisation of funds, inter state imbalances, non availing of central assistance and defects in financial management were observed in respect of most of the schemes. (Joshna ottaplackal 2022.) (Ottaplackal & Anbu, 2022)

Tribal education in India: government initiatives and challenges is an article published in international journal of research in social science. This paper studies the programs and articles along with the quantitative analysis of literacy rates, gender enrolment ratio and dropout rates. The socio economic and cultural challenges are also mentioned. (Daripa, n.d.)

Most of the studies points to dropouts and lack of motivation as the challenge for educational development of tribal students. If proper remedial measures are done for their emotional well being and there by creating a friendly environment in schools, mainstreaming of tribal students will not be an issue any more. Studies have shown that when environment friendly atmosphere has been created for curriculum transaction, students' level of academic motivation has increased. Reviews related to advanced teaching methods and curriculum changes is not surplus. Three such studies are mentioning here.

Teaching English through Drama to tribal students of undergraduate level at remote area of south Gujarat region in India. A study done by Falguni p desai in 2020. It found that drama enhances creative thinking in learners. It was an effective method for the ESL classroom. (Shri M.R. Desai Arts & E.E. Laher Kosadia Commerce College, India & Desai, 2020)

Another study done by Viswanath in 2019 is tribal folklore as ELT material for first generation learners. Course content from local folklore has created interest among learners. First generation learners who were not at all interested to learn English language, started to show interest in the language by using this method for teaching. (Viswanath & Mohanty, 2019)

Educational content and curricula in tribal regions in higher education by Maheshbhai patel finds that rigid system of schooling which emphasize discipline, routine norms, teacher centered instruction e. t. c have made the children wary of school which is actually against the free atmosphere and interaction prevailing in their cultural norms. (Maheshbhai 2019)

### ***Suggestions for the enrichment of tribal learner's abilities and there by their successful academic career:***

- Special training for teachers to understand tribal language and culture can help students to cooperate with teachers and share their feelings and needs.
- A teacher from tribal community can be included in schools nearer to tribal areas.
- Framing of flexible curriculum as per individual need for tribal students. Curricular objectives should be set in accordance with the tribal culture and their needs.
- Follow up of the implemented programs and policies is inevitable and also necessary modifications should be made so as to make the policy effective.
- Counselling and motivation classes including successful personalities from the tribal communities can be conducted so that the students get inspired easily.

- Researches should be conducted on new and innovative methods for teaching tribal students.
- Researches should be conducted to know about the need for extra facilities and coaching other than the school hours.
- Vocational training with in the school or locality will help tribes to earn for their further studies.

## CONCLUSION

Education is a human right that increases political, cultural, economical and social opportunities available. Tribal education creates awareness among the students about the available resources for academic development and various methods of acquiring skills related to their culture. It creates capacity to respond to the opportunities for challenging their living conditions. According to 2011 census, 8.6 percentage of total population of the country is tribes. Despite of the constant efforts by both central and state govt. for the development of tribal education, they are very low in comparison to general castes and communities. Even if tribal children go to school they dropout and join the labor force as child labor. The solution is to create interest among learners to come to school. A suitable curriculum promoting their social and mental wellbeing can attract students to continue their studies and conquer heights. Understanding the causes from its roots and finding solutions from the ground level itself promotes further developments. Once resolved scientifically, a problem will not trouble again in the future.

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