

EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF SCHEDULED TRIBES IN COIMBATORE DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

Education is the key factor in accelerating the pace of development of any society. The tribal people are considered as a distinct ethnic group because of their peculiar socio cultural traditions and economic practices. Being inhabitants of remote rural areas, deep forests or hilly regions, the tribal people remained by and large unaffected in all walks of life by the outside World and they were declared educationally backward. In India, many research attempts were directed at analysing the tribal education. But there have been limited effort focused on analyzing educational status of scheduled tribes in Coimbatore. Hence, an effort was made to study the 'Educational status of scheduled tribes in Coimbatore District' with the basic objectives of studying the educational status of tribal population in terms of enrolment, dropout, and retention rate; finding out the attitude of the head of the family towards male and female tribal education; identifying the determinants of demand for tribal education and recommend measures to promote tribal education. The study was related to 100 tribal households in Tholampalayam village in Karamadai block of Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu. The study was related to the time period of 2008 - 2009. The details relating to enrolment, dropout, retention and problems in education were collected by administering an interview schedule to the head of the households. The study attempted a logit analysis to identify the determinants of tribal education and found that the important determinants of demand for education of scheduled tribes were father's education, father's occupation and mother's occupation. To improve the educational status of tribal students the study recommends that there is a need for establishing more number of schools within the locality and greater awareness has to be created about the importance of education through mass media and also with the help of non-governmental agencies.

KEYWORDS

Educational status, Scheduled Tribes, Enrolment, Dropout, Determinants.

INTRODUCTION

Education is the key factor in accelerating the pace of development of any society. Education enables human beings to understand the interrelationship among the tangible and intangible phenomena surrounding them and give skill to translate the knowledge into action. Acquisition of education helps workers to take advantage of technical changes, which increases their productivity and earnings. (Asok Basu, 2002).

For the purpose of education and to improve literacy rate, the Government of India has been increased educational expenditure in various Five Year Plans. The literacy rate in India increased from 64.84 percent in 2001 to 74.04 percent in 2011 (Census, 2011). Though, we were able to achieve an increase in general literacy rate, educational status of the disadvantaged groups, in particular, of the scheduled tribes is in pathetic condition both in respect of coverage and achievement even after sixty six years of independence.

The tribal people are considered as a distinct ethnic group because of their peculiar socio cultural traditions and economic practices. Another important feature of the scheduled tribes is that most of them live in remote, inaccessible hilly and forest areas. Hence, they are cut off from the national mainstream and lead an isolated life and they are considered as the most marginalized and deprived section of the society. Being inhabitants of remote rural areas, deep forests or hilly regions, the tribal people remained by and large unaffected in all walks of life by the outside World and they were declared educationally backward.

The Government of India recognized the importance of educational development of tribal people and the legislative provision were formulated for the spread of tribal education. According to Article 46 of the Indian constitution, special emphasis is laid on the educational development of tribals. It says "The State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people and in particular of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, and protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation."

In addition, the Central and State Governments have initiated a number of other measures like establishment of girls hostel and boys hostel for scheduled tribes, ashram schools in tribal sub plan area, awarding of various types of scholarships to scheduled tribe students, coaching and allied schemes, book-bank for scheduled tribe children studying in medical and engineering college, free supply of books, stationary, uniform etc., reimbursement of tuition fees, mid-day meals, introduction of modern trades and training centers for self-employment etc., (Mohanty, P.K, 2000).

Though a number of programmes were implemented for promoting education among tribals over years, India presents a bleak picture with regard to levels of literacy among tribals. According to NSS report 2009-10, the national level literacy was estimated as 72.8 percent, while literacy among males was estimated as 81.1 percent and for females as 64.0 percent. The corresponding figures with regard to tribal males and females were found to be 71.7 percent and 54.4 percent.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In India, the need for providing tribal education becomes more pronounced in all the States, since the States have significant proportion of tribal population.

Sundara Rao and Rambabu (2001) analyzed 'Inter-tribe variations in literacy levels'. The study was related to Srikakulam district in Andhra Pradesh. The study found that only 32.22 percent of the households have completed primary education, 6.11 percent have completed secondary education and 61.67 were illiterates. Out of the total family members only 40.72 percent were literatures. The study found that 70.07 percent of male children are literates and 60.74 percent of female children are literates. Increasing educational facilities, particularly, separate ashram schools for girl students, scholarships to girl students coupled with favorable change in parental attitude has resulted in more and more girls attending schools. Among school dropout children, the proportion of female children is more than that of male children. Most of the children are dropouts at the primary education level. The number of dropout children is more in the remote hilly tracts rather than in plains. Raj Pathania (2006) analyzed the constraints perceived by the tribal adolescents belonging to three main tribal communities of Himachal Pradesh. The study found that the majority of mother respondents (75%) were illiterate. One-fifth of the families had Rs.600- Rs.900 as monthly income where as one-tenth had income less than Rs.1000. The main constraint in the community was less number of girls having attended schools because of parental attitude towards female education. Biradar and Jayasheela (2007) studied the 'Effects of educational inequality among social groups in rural

India'. The study found that, at All India level, the rate of literacy for scheduled tribes increased from 29.6 percent to 47.1 percent, whereas in the case of others, it increased from 57.7 to 68.8 percent during the same period. The rate of literacy for male scheduled tribes increased from 40.7 percent to 59.2 percent. In respect of female scheduled tribes, it increased from 18.2 percent to 43.8 percent during the same period. The educational status of scheduled tribe females was found to be significantly lower as compared to any other person both in rural and urban areas in India. According to Snehalata Panda (2008), the reasons for tribals keeping away from formal education are economic, lack of value for formal education and social taboo attached to educating the girls. Though education is free for tribals, the same has not proved as successful in attracting students of both sexes because of the time constraint and the absence of usage of formal education in their work, which is mostly agricultural in nature and consist of domestic chores. Interaction with the tribals revealed that several of them considered formal education as a waste of time. Moreover, parents hold a low opinion about girl's education. In India, research attempts were directed- (Asok Basu (2002), Rajpathania (2006), Biradar and Jayasheela (2007) etc.) at analyzing the tribal education. But there have been limited effort focused on analyzing educational status of scheduled tribes in Coimbatore. Hence, a research study on 'Educational status of scheduled tribes in Coimbatore District' was formulated.

OBJECTIVES

- To study the educational status of tribal population in terms of enrolment, dropout, and retention rate;
- To find out the attitude of the head of the family towards male and female tribal education;
- To identify the determinants of demand for tribal education and
- To recommend measures to promote tribal education.

HYPOTHESIS FRAMED

- There is no significant association between the type of family and attitude towards tribal education;
- Parent's education, parent's employment and family income were insignificant determinants of demand for tribal education
- There is no significant difference in male and female enrolment of tribal children.

METHODOLOGY

The study was related to Coimbatore District in Tamil Nadu. Coimbatore District is inhabited by 28342 scheduled tribes and accounted for 0.8 percent of the total scheduled tribe population in the State in 2011 (Primary Census Abstract, Tamil Nadu 2011).

The study adopted multistage random sampling. At the first stage, the block for the study was selected. In the first stage Karamadai block was selected for the study, since it has got the largest tribal population (8076) among the blocks of Coimbatore. At the second stage the village for the study was selected. The study was confined to Tholampalayam village, since the village is easily accessible. Tholampalayam village is inhabited by several tribal areas such as, Melbhaviyur, Kuzhiyur, Senguttai, Kalliur and Pattisalai. Of these areas Kuzhiyur and Senguttai were selected from the viewpoint of convenience. At the third stage, the respondents for the study were selected. Kuzhiyur has fifty tribal houses and Senguttai has seventy tribal houses. A benchmark survey was carried out to identify the households having the school going or college going population in the age group of 5 to 21. Final survey was confined to forty houses in Kuzhiyur and sixty houses in Senguttai. Therefore, the total size of the sample amounts to 100.

The details relating to enrolment, dropout, retention and problems were collected by administering an interview schedule to the respondents. The study was related to the time period of 2008 - 2009. The pilot study was conducted in December 2008 and final field survey was conducted in January 2009.

QUANTITATIVE TOOL USED

(A) CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS

The study used chi-square analysis to find out association between the type of family and attitude towards tribal education.

The formula used was

$$\chi^2 = \frac{\sum (O-E)^2}{\sum E} \quad (i)$$

Where O- Observed frequency and

E- Expected frequency.

The degrees of freedom are given by (c-1) (r-1), where "r" denotes number of rows and "c" denotes number of columns. If the calculated value of the chi-square is less than table value at 5 percent level of degrees of freedom the null hypothesis is accepted and if the calculated value is greater than the table value the null hypothesis is rejected.

(B) LOGIT MODEL

The study attempted a logit analysis to identify the determinants of tribal education. The household decision as to whether a tribal child will be sent to school/college is a qualitative variable. It depends on a large number of demographic, economic and social factors.

Based on past studies, important variables like family income, family size, cost of education, father's education, mother's education, father's occupation, mother's occupation, father's age, mother's age and land ownership have been considered in the present analysis, to identify the determinants of tribal education.

The probability of 100 percent willingness to send the children to school depends on the following attributes.

i) The parental characteristics- father's age (FAGE), mother's age (MAGE), father's education (FLIT), mother's education (MLIT), father's occupation (FOOCO) and mother's occupation (MOCCO);

ii) The demographic characteristics like the size of the family (SF); and

iii) Economic characteristics like family income (FINC), per head educational expenses (PHEDEX) and land ownership (LOWN).

Hence, the equation is written as follows,

$$Z = \beta_0 + \beta_1 FAGE + \beta_2 MAGE + \beta_3 FLIT + \beta_4 MLIT + \beta_5 FOOCO + \beta_6 MOCCO + \beta_7 SF + \beta_8 FINC + \beta_9 PHEDEX + \beta_{10} LOWN \quad (ii)$$

The estimated values of the parameters β_1 to β_{10} were used to describe the probability of 100 percent willingness on the part of the household to send tribal children for education.

Father's age and mother's age were indicated in terms of completed years. The coefficient of the equation in relation to father's age and mother's age was expected to be positive. Similarly the coefficient of the equation in relation to father's education and mother's education were expected to be positive. Father's occupation was denoted as dummy variable. If the father was employed, the value 'one' was assigned and if he was unemployed, the value 'zero' was assigned. The coefficient of the equation with respect to father's occupation was expected to be positive. Mother's occupation was denoted as a dummy variable. If the mother in a particular household was employed, the value 'one' was assigned and if she was unemployed, the value 'zero' was assigned. The coefficient of the equation in relation to mother's occupation was expected to be positive. Size of the family has an absolute value. The coefficient of the equation in relation to size of the family was expected to be negative. Family income of the household also has an absolute value. The coefficient of the equation in relation to the family income was expected to be positive. Per head educational expenses of the children in the selected household was measured in terms of rupees and the coefficient of the equation in relation to per head educational expenses was expected to be negative. Land ownership is measured in terms of acres and the coefficient of equation in relation to land ownership was expected to be positive.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**A. GENERAL INFORMATION**

The general information required for the study was analysed in terms of age, education, occupation, income, religion, type of family etc.,

Table – I represents the general information of the selected tribal households.

TABLE – I GENERAL INFORMATION OF THE SELECTED TRIBAL HOUSEHOLDS

S.No	Particulars	Number of respondents
1	Age of the head of the family (in years)	
	Below 30	3
	30-40	46
	40-50	47
	50-60	4
2	Educational level of the head of the family	
	Illiterate	64
	Primary	10
	Middle	13
	Secondary	13
3	Occupation of the head of the family	
	Cultivators	86
	Mill workers	9
	Agricultural labourers	5
4	Monthly family Income (in rupees)	
	Below 2000	4
	2000-3000	25
	3000-4000	61
	4000-5000	10
5	Religion	
	Hindus	86
	Christians	14
6	Type of family	
	Nuclear family	93
	Joint family	7

Source: Field survey.

Table - I makes it clear that majority of the respondents were in the age group of 40-50. The mean age of the respondents was estimated 40.2 years. Since parent's education has a significant impact on children education, the current study tried to find out the educational level of the respondents. It is disheartening to note that nearly 64 percent of the respondents were illiterate. As such, they did not show interest in sending the children to school.

Regarding the occupation status, the study found that 86 percent of the selected respondents were cultivators, 9 percent were employed as mill workers and 5 percent were employed as agricultural workers. It is evident that majority of the respondents (61 percent) were getting the monthly income of Rs. 3000-4000 and the average monthly income earned by the respondents was estimated as Rs. 3270.

About 86 percent were Hindus and 14 percent were Christians and majority 93 percent of the respondents belonged to nuclear family and 7 percent belonged to joint family.

B.DETAILED ABOUT THE ENROLMENT, DROPOUT AND RETENTION:

The study tried to analyze the enrolment, dropout and retention.

(i) ENROLMENT RATE

In the selected households 171 children represent school/ college going population. Of them, only 158 students are enrolled. Table - II gives details about the number of tribal students enrolled in various stages.

TABLE-II STAGE WISE ENROLMENT OF SELECTED TRIBAL CHILDREN

Stage	Male	Female	Total
Pre primary	2	5	7
Primary	18	16	34
Middle	26	20	46
Secondary	17	23	40
Higher secondary	16	13	29
College	1	1	2
Total	80	78	158

Source: Field survey.

The enrolment rate was calculated to be 92.39 percent. The poor enrolment of tribal children might be due to difficulty in medium of instruction, hostile attitude of the teachers. In the selected households, of the total male school going population, 80 were enrolled and hence male enrolment rate was calculated as 50.63 percent. Of the total female school going population 78 were enrolled and hence the female enrolment rate was 49.37 percent. As such, the female enrolment was lower than the male enrolment rate and there exists disparity in male and female enrolment rate.

(ii) DROPOUT RATE

When the students enrolled are not able to complete their study, they drop out from studies and this is wastage of human resources. Table- III presents the details about the stage wise drop out of selected tribal children.

TABLE-III STAGE WISE DROP OUT OF SELECTED TRIBAL CHILDREN

Stage	Number of male dropouts	Male dropout rate	Number of female dropouts	Female dropout rate	Total drop outs	Drop out rate
Primary	-	-	-	-	-	-
Middle	4	15.38	3	15	7	30.38
Secondary	2	11.76	7	43.75	9	55.51
Higher secondary	-	-	-	-	-	-
College	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	6	27.14	10	58.75	16	85.89

Source: Field survey.

Table indicates that of the students enrolled, 16 were dropped out and dropout rate was calculated as 85.89 percent. The dropout rate at the secondary level is high as compared to other levels. This might be due to the fact that they discontinue studies due to the compulsion of the parents to look after the young siblings or go for work. The comparative analysis of dropout rate of males and females reveals that female dropout rate was higher than that of male dropout. This might be due to the fact that female children are retained by the parents to look after their siblings.

(iii) RETENTION RATE

Retention represents the successful completion of the course and this is a mark of educational achievement. Table- IV gives the details about the retention of the selected tribal students.

TABLE- IV RETENTION RATE OF SELETED TRIBAL CHILDREN

Stage	Male	Female	Total
Primary	-	-	-
Middle	22	17	39
Secondary	15	16	31
Higher secondary	-	-	-
College	-	-	-
Total	37	33	70

Source: Field survey.

Of the total tribal students enrolled, only 70 have completed and the retention rate was calculated as 44.30 percent. A comparison of the male and female retention rate revealed that among the tribal students, female retention rate was lower (33 percent) as compared to males (37 percent). This might be due to the fact that female children could not study due to household work.

(C) ATTITUDE TOWARDS EDUCATION

The study tried to find out the attitude of the head of the family towards male and female tribal education.

Table - V brings out the information on the level of education for male and female tribal children as preferred by the head of the households.

TABLE -V: LEVEL OF EDUCATION FOR MALE AND FEMALE TRIBAL CHILDREN AS PREFERRED BY THE HEAD OF THE HOUSEHOLDS

Level of education	For male children	For female children
Primary	-	-
Secondary	1	24
Higher secondary	66	52
College level	13	2
Total	80	78

Source: Field survey.

Of the total respondents 80 percent were having positive attitude towards male education and 78 percent towards female education. However, there existed variations in the level of education for male and female children as desired by the head of the households. It is obvious from Table -V that majority of the respondents (66 percent) were of the view that tribal boys should be educated upto higher secondary level. Similarly majority of the respondents (52 percent) preferred to educate their daughters till higher secondary level. The application of chi-square analysis indicated that there was an association between the type of family and the attitude towards tribal education. Since the calculated $\chi^2=6.7868$ was greater than $\chi^2_{0.05}=3.84$.

(D) IDENTIFICATION OF DETERMINANTS OF DEMAND FOR TRIBAL EDUCATION

The empirical analysis through logit model helps to identify the major determinants of demand for tribal education. Table-VI presents the parameter estimates of the logit model.

TABLE-VI: PARAMETER ESTIMATES OF THE LOGIT MODEL

S.No	Variables	Co-efficient	T ratio
1	Father's age (FAGE)	-0.839	-2.219*
2	Mother's (MAGE)	0.735	1.979
3	Father's Education (FLIT)	0.307	1.612
4	Mother's Education (MLIT)	-0.324	-1.242
5	Father's occupation (FOCCO)	0.843	0.001
6	Mother's occupation (MOCCO)	0.751	0.527
7	Size of family (SF)	0.0001	1.768
8	Family income (FINC)	-1.518	-2.986**
9	Per head educational expenses (PHEDEX)	0.00005	3.053**
10	Land ownership (LOWN)	0.0000004	0.693

* Statistically significant at 1 percent level

** Statistically significant at 5 percent level

The analysis revealed that father's age has a negative impact on tribal education. Higher the age of the father lesser is the willingness to send the tribal children school. However, mother's age was estimated to have a positive impact on tribal education. The aged mothers are more willing to send the tribal children to school. Father's education has a positive impact on tribal education. Higher the educational attainment of the father, greater is the willingness to send the tribal children to school. Father's occupation and mother's occupation were estimated to have a positive impact on tribal education. The employed fathers and mothers were interested in providing education to the children. Size of the family has got a positive impact on tribal education since, the estimated co-efficient was positive. This implies that in the selected households tribal education is not constrained by number of members in the family.

The study found that the family income has a negative impact on tribal education. Per head education expenses for tribal children has a positive impact. The estimated co-efficient was statistically significant as indicated by the 't' value. Land ownership has got a positive association with impact on tribal education. Higher the landownership there is more willingness to send the tribal students to schools (or) colleges.

CONCLUSION

1. The educational status of scheduled tribes is poor as indicated by poor enrolment rate and high dropout rate;
2. There is difference in educational status of scheduled tribe boys and scheduled tribe girls and
3. The important determinants of demand for education of scheduled tribes were father's education, father's occupation and mother's occupation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To improve the educational status of tribal students the study recommends the following measures.

1. There is need for establishing more number of schools within the tribal locality;
2. Appointment of adequate number of teachers in the school is essential;
3. Provision of uniforms is to be made upto the higher secondary level;
4. More number of buses should be operated between the place of the residence and the area where the school is located and

5. Greater awareness has to be created about the importance of education through mass media and also with the help of non-governmental agencies.

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