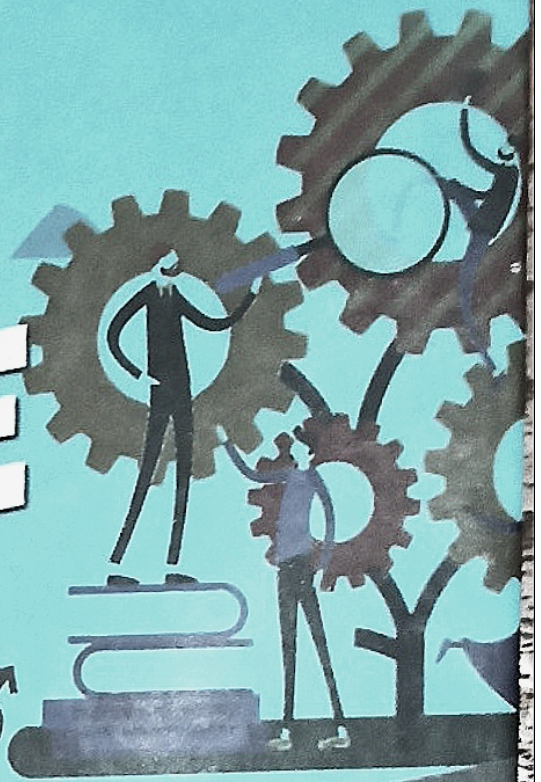


SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

EDUCATION, SOCIETY AND CULTURE

PART - II



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(Part II)

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Tribal Education in Assam: Problems and Challenges

Mante Sakachep

Introduction

Education is the backbone of the nation. It plays a very significant role in the life of every human being. It is very important, without education society can not develop. So it is considered as one of the most important indicators for overall development of the country. The Constitution of India, highlighted the importance of education. According to the Indian Constitution, it is the duty of state to provide for free and compulsory education for all children belonging to all sections of the society including Schedule Tribes, Schedule Caste and other Backward Communities. Article 45 of the Indian Constitution is under specific regarding obligations of the state. It directs the state to strive to provide free and compulsory education up to the age of 14 years.

The term tribal came from 'tribe' which refers to a class of human social group. They are also known as indigenous people since they have a self identification with common and unique characteristics and social norms which distinguish them from other people of the society. The lifestyle of these ethnic groups may vary on the basis of their geographical location. They share characteristics of unity with each other, their earlier period and the territory they exist on. In our nation Tribal people are often denoted

as native people, ethnic group, first nations, aboriginal people, adivasi, janajati, hill tribes, or hunter-gatherers etc. All over the world there are more than 476 million aboriginal people existing in 90 countries crosswise the world, accounting for 6.2 % of the universal population. An estimate of approximately 5000 indigenous ethnic group found throughout the world. Our nation comprises the second largest tribal inhabitants in the world. As per the census 2011 data, the tribal demography constitutes about 8.9 percent of the total population of the country. There are 705 indigenous group found in India with an estimated demography of 104 million.

Tribal People and Assam

Assam consists of 35 districts and among it, Bodoland Territorial Council, Dima Hasao and Karbi Anglong council are the main tribal dominated areas. Tribal people are also living in different other districts in Assam but they are less in number. Assam is one of the Northeastern State in India. NE India includes 8 states which are Manipur, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Mizoram, Tripura, Nagaland and Sikkim. In accordance to census 2011, there are 3.88 million tribal people in Assam, which accounts for 12.45% of the total population. One of the typical features of schedule tribes is that the conventional of them live in extend habitations located in remote, interior, and distant hilly and forest areas of Assam. The culture, nature, traditions, language, norms, believes and values are different in every ethnic group. Majority of the indigenous groups express themselves by variety of languages (Verbal Communication) which are different from the language spoken in the area of the state where they are to be found. As per geographical location, the tribes of Assam of India is divided into two categories as hill tribes and plain tribes. The main tribal group of Assam are-Bodo, kuki, Dimasa, Barman, Hmar, Khelma/Sakachep, Hrangkhoh, Ranglong, Chorei, Khasi, Reang etc.

Problems and Challenges

It has been observed all over the world that the dropout rate among the Tribal students has been always high in comparison to other groups of people in India. The pass percentage and literacy of the tribal students have been surprisingly lower than the general and other groups of population. The situation remains same in case of Assam as well. Parents education form the building blocks of students progress in life. In many ways a students performance and achievements in their early life depends on the parents educational background. Parents with good educational background have more opportunities economics wise and are more successful in motivating and guiding their children in the field of education. But in case of uneducated parents, their children are lack of motivation and lower in educational level. Therefore, it is necessary to see this aspects of the students life to understand the problems face by the students. Sometimes in most cases of tribal students, kind of parents profession, greatly decides the fate of the students educational career. Parents with good occupation and jobs are usually found to be financially more stable and able to support financial in the educational expanses of their children. On the other hand, parents without proper jobs or income are found to be financially weaker. They are not able to finance their children especially for higher education. This condition causes the higher dropout rate of their children. Income of the family directly affects the education of the students. Poor parents are unable to support their children education. Students belonging to poor family have to work many times to support their families income. This causes poor pass percentage and high dropout rates among the students of poor families. A large majority do not secure good results because for good results a lots of time needed to spend in their studies, this students somehow manage time to study and in the same time they have to work to support their parents financially.

Language problems: Language is the first source of contact for a person. It is through language a person learns the basic knowledge regarding his life and surrounding. In this sense, what medium of language is used to teach to the students is very important. It is universally accepted that, a child learns more when he is taught in his own language or he is comfortable with. The indisputable fact is that mother's language is the natural and most comfortable medium for transfer of knowledge to the new born child from elders in society. For school education too it is the most effective and comfortable medium for the learners. But to use the mother tongue as a medium of instructions the common medium requires adequately rich vocabulary based for study of literature, science, arts, commerce, fine arts etc. and a wide variety linguistic flexibility and capability to express all kinds of human emotions and scientific ideas. Except Bodo all other tribal languages are not considered as a local language. And they also don't have enough vocabulary and literature to teach in the higher secondary level. Even their literature is not sufficient for primary level only Bodo language is found in higher institutions. So, most of the tribal students in Barak valley go for English medium and only few students went for Bengali medium or Hindi medium. In the same way, tribal students of Dima Hasao and Karbi Anglong go for English medium as their own mother tongue is not a medium of instructions. So these people faced many problems regarding local language issue especially in their career matter.

Tribal languages' development and spread are still stagnant since they are not recognised as acceptable as a medium of instruction in schools. Because expansion is the primary factor in a colloquial language's growth. Up to the post-graduate level, only the Bodo language of Assam has been approved as a medium of teaching. On the other hand, until the primary level, languages like Mising, Rabha,

Dimasa, Hmar, Khampti, Kuki, etc. are restricted to a single subject. A language can be studied and researched in a variety of ways in that language if it is accepted as a medium of education. But as a result of not receiving acknowledgment, several questions remain regarding the study of Assam tribal language.

Finding and Suggestions

Tribal education system should have some changes and consideration to make them equal with the society. This changes in education policies can only make the tribal people interest in every stages of education. Some of these are as follows- literacy campaigns, attitude of the elderly individual, relevant study materials in local languages, appointment of local teachers and female teachers, stipends and various scholarships, residential schools and colleges, provide social security specially for the girls students, proper monitoring, equal opportunities, reduction in the household responsibilities, stop crime activities in schools, stop early marriages, create interest in study, provide free food opportunity, provide proper guidance and counselling etc.

The study also find out that among the tribal people there are two classes i.e the rich and the poor. Students who belongs to rich family, their pass outcome is higher as compare to students who belong to poor family. The students belonging to higher class they can easily admit in good private schools and colleges. They can also pursue higher studies without any financial problems and they got enough support from their parents. On the other hand, some students belonging to poor family can not admit in good schools and colleges. They have to support their parents financially. They also don't get much support from their parents. Some students can study upto higher secondary level and for higher studies they don't have financial support from their parents. So they have left their studies and work to support their parents. The study also find out that those students who somehow manage to continue their studies in higher education also face many problems after completion of their

studies. One of the major problems they face is local language issues. As most the tribal students are not much familiar with the local languages in Assam, but when the government of Assam make mandatory for local language for some posts, the eligible tribal candidates face problems on this local language issue. So the policy makers should look on this matter very seriously for the Upliftment of the poor tribal people. Another suggestion is that within the tribal community there two classes, have and have not, so most of the reservation seats for ST in term of Education and government jobs are enjoy by the higher class of tribal people. So the poor tribal students are getting very less chance to enjoy this opportunities. So the study suggests that there should be some modifications about the reservation system of the Schedule Tribe.

Conclusion

Education is the groundwork for the development of every people of the country. It is also essential for the overall development of human capital. Each research study procedure has some educational implications, in the same way the present study has been educative in nature in the areas of the tribal of Assam, India, quality of education in Assam, improve in terms of tribal education, enrichment of information and ability to conduct action research. The study has its educative value in solving the problems face by the tribal people of Assam at all the stages of education. The work is an eye opener for the educational planners, educational administrators, policy maker and community members in improving the system for ensuring the quality of education for this section of the country. The findings of the present study would be helpful to tribal education for giving suitable guideline in all stages of education. Education is the most important agent in the process of development and tribal education is utmost important not only for economic development but also for the inner strength of the community to meet new challenges in daily life. There is an imperative need for different government interventions,

policy makers and planners to address this problem and assign more funds in the central and state educational budgets for expansion of tribal education. The tribal youths should be more engage in every activity of society and school, so that they can show their hidden talents and capabilities. There should be appropriate development of the curriculum, medium of instruction, instructional methods and teaching-learning methods, so that the tribal children feel motivated towards achievement of education.

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