



## Status of Tribal Education in Andaman & Nicobar Islands: A study

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### **Abstract**

*Education is the key catalyst to the development of human resources. In the past education was one of the main considerations for hierarchical classification in Indian Hindu society. Education was out of reach to the poor and backward peoples and also to tribal. Lack of it is largely responsible for the exploitation and pitiable plight of the tribal. For them, education is the pivot on which their success depends.*

**Keywords:** Primitive Tribes, Reservation, Higher Education, Infrastructure, Nicobarese, Social inclusion,

### **Introduction**

Rural education of India can't be evaluated without inclusion of situation of tribal education. Basically, tribals of India are the original inhabitants of rural India. They are mostly settled in remote, isolated, hilly and forests areas. As far as, tribal education is concerned, the situation is far from satisfactory. Education could not reach to them because of their isolation, remoteness, and poor economic condition, lack of proper education policy, migration and their frequent displacement due to development of heavy projects in their areas. India has the second largest tribal population in the world next to African countries. The scheduled tribes accounts for 67.76 million (1991 census) and 8.08% of India's total population. Of these 1.95% was primitive tribes. The highest

concentration of scheduled tribes is found in North - East states of Mizoram (94.75%) Nagaland (87.70%), Meghalaga (83.53%) and Orissa (22.21%) and A & N Islands (8.27%) .(Dilip Shah, 2003) .

### **Concept of inclusion - exclusion Theory:**

The term social inclusion was actually originated in France in 1970's. Mr. Luhman has defined the terms in following words "The concept of inclusion means the encompassing of the entire population in the performance of the individual functions systems. On the one hand, this concerns access these benefits and, on the other, dependence of individual modes of living on them. To the extent that inclusion is achieved, groups disappear that do not or only marginally participate in social living."



However, the definition of "Social exclusion" was offered by the European foundation with following words: "Social exclusion is the process through which individuals or groups are wholly or partially excluded from full participation in the society in which they live". (C.J. Sonowal, 2008, p. 123). According to United Nations, the social inclusion – "An inclusive society must be based respect for all human rights and fundamental freedom, cultural and religious diversity; social justices and the special needs of venerable and disadvantaged groups, democratic participation and the rule of law". (*ibid*,p.125) Hence, both inclusion and exclusion works simultaneously. An individual or a group may be included in one desired/ thrust area but may be excluded in another important area. Therefore, as a whole, the social exclusion denotes a different line of understandings of a society at large or individuals at least.

- I. Showing inability to participate in economic, social, political and cultural life effectively.
- II. Keep distance and alienation from mainstream society.
- III. Away from major societal mechanisms which produce or distribute social resources.

Recognizing the importance of education, the framers of the Indian Constitution have made specific provision in Article 15 (4) and Art 46 for promoting education among the scheduled Tribes. Our first Prime

Minister Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru was very much in favour of the integration of tribals with the mainstream of the nation. According to ( Dr. Sachichadananda 1964), "Education is an integral part of culture, it cannot be divorced from people and the society they live in ...without this, the social heritage of one generation cannot be transmitted to another." Education spreads Knowledge. Knowledge gives inner strength and creates sense of justice, which is very essential for the tribals for attaining freedom from exploitation and poverty.

After the advent of democracy in India, a special consideration was made of the education of the scheduled Tribes, which witnessed massive social change. It is due to it that the constitution has given safeties and securities to the tribal. An elaborate programme of scholarship, reservation of seats in educational institutions along with various other ancillary facilities is in operation. Therefore, the problems of education among the Tribal have received a good deal of attention in recent years. The education of the tribal people is a major programme of equalization of social and national integration.

The Andaman & Nicobar Islands, a Union Territory is a classic homeland of indigenous tribes. There are six different types of tribes inhabited in the chain of islands. First four tribal are belonging to negrito race are called Great Andamanese, Sentinelese, Onges, Jarawas living in Andaman Group of Islands. Rest two tribes are Mongoloid



who are Nicobarese and Shompens living in Nicobar Group of Islands. The total tribal population is 29469 (2001 census), which constitute about 8.45% of the total population of U.T. (356152).

### **Post-Independence Education Among Tribes**

To identify the educational status of tribal of the Union Territory, other than Nicobar tribes, four Nigrilo tribes and one Mongoloid are primitives. Their number of population is in extinct conditions. Except Onge and Andamanese, other three tribes are not coming in the mainstream. Few children are available among Onges and Andamanese as schools going stages. Therefore Nicobari, a major tribal and are in the stage of modernization & development going to count in the present study. For accelerating modern education among Nicobari children, the missionary schools were taken over by the Govt. According to 1955 education Survey, in Nicobar, there were five primaries and one middle school with a total of 621 students. Within five years, a Higher Secondary Multi-purpose school with 58 students on roll was started. Since early sixties a handful of meritorious students have availed higher education in mainland institutions. For obtaining technical and professional educations, the Govt. of India has reserved 20% of seats for tribal students, out of total seats available for U.T. students in various institutions in mainland. As per the 1990 census the tribal literacy rate was 47.02 % of which female literacy was 40.71 % whereas, the

literacy rate of Union Territory was 73.02 %.

The post-independence education for Onges and Great Andamanese is not encouraging. Since early seventies, Bharatiya Adimjati Sevak Sangh had taken the initiative to start schools for these two tribes. Later, in 1976 Andaman Adim Janjati Vikash Samiti (AAJVS) look forwards with the same mission by opening two primary schools one at Strait Island, the settlement area of Great Andamanese and another at Dugong Creek, (Little Andaman) Onge settlement area.

### **Educational Infrastructure**

As far as infrastructure for schooling in tribal areas is concerned, there were 59 schools of which 25 are primary, 10 middle level, 10 secondary and 5 senior secondary level and two Ashram schools. The local administration and the Union Govt. are very serious about the education of the tribals of UT. A number of schemes and programmes have been undertaken to give best and favourable education atmosphere to these tribal students. Centrally sponsored schemes for accelerating education facilities among tribal students are: -

- 1) Free higher education to tribal girl students on special central assistance at Banasthali Vidyapith, Rajasthan.
- 2) Free uniform.
- 3) Mid-day meal to students of class I to VIII.



- 4) Free-note books and text books.
- 5) Free coaching classes.
- 6) Free-boarding and lodging facilities for studies in Port Blair and mainland educational institutions.

Since early eighties, a good numbers of girl's tribal students have been obtaining education from class V to P.G. level at Banasthali Vidyapith, Rajasthan. Fooding, lodging and education expenditure has been borne by the Govt. of India. An amount of Rs. 267000/- have been sanctioned (for the 2005-06) against 8 girls, who are now studying in this institutions. Since 2004-05 an additional scholarship @ Rs. 500/-

per month to 30 tribal students have been sanctioned against them who have been pursuing high / professional education in the mainland. In addition to that all tribal students are getting free fooding and lodging during their studies in mainland.(Educational Reports ,2007)

Moreover all the tribal students have been exempted from payment of frees in respect of examinations conducted by recognized universities / Boards. The administration is making necessary payment under these schemes to the concerned institutions.

#### **Enrolment of Tribal Pupils in Andaman & Nicobar Education**

State of education	Boys			Girls			Total		
	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Primary	1625	1868	1964	1507	1675	1786	3132	3543	3950
Middle	920	1002	1052	812	845	831	1732	1847	1883
Secondary	398	436	482	436	486	477	834	922	959
Sr. Secondary	89	108	123	121	158	169	210	266	292
TTI & B.Ed	7	1	3	23	21	26	30	22	29
Poly. Ech.		2	2	2	5	5	2	7	7
College	60	69	67	49	57	89	109	126	156
ITI	6	2	5	11	6	4	17	8	9
Ashram	60	60	60	-	-	-	60	60	60
Total	3165	3548	3758	2961	3253	3387	6126	6801	7145

**Source : Basic Statistics, 2004-05, pp.**

The enrolment of tribal students for three academic sessions reveals that the number of primary level students has been increasing. But the number of enrolment at middle level has been reduced to just half of the total strength at primary level. Further the number

has been falling down in secondary level. Only 10% to 15% students are appearing in the XII<sup>th</sup> board out of the total enrolment of middle school students. At degree level their number is further decreasing. In teacher training and technical education line, the number of



enrolment is very less. The drop out case is very high among tribal students.

Rs.24021.00 lakh for tribal education under six major headings(table 1).

During 11 th. five year plan period , the govt. had outlay an amount of

Table 1. Eleventh five year tribal education plan outlay-2007-2012

Sl.No.	Name of the scheme	Outlay in Rs.Lakh	Summary of the targeted works.
1	Elementary education	9442.00	Supply of mid-day meals,construction of school building ,staff quarters ,purchases of stationeries' for students
2	Secondary education	9244.00	Construction and renovation of class rooms ,science lib.purchases of teaching aids,furniture.
3	Qualitative education	2240.00	In-services training for teachers, imparting quality for students.
4	Direction & administration	940.00	Purchases of computers , staff medical expenditures
5	Library	330.00	Purchases of reference &text books,magazine.
6	Sports,Arts & culture	1825.00	Development of play grounds,stadiums walls,conducts cultural activities.

Total = 24021.00

Under the scheme of free elementary education to tribal students, the incentives like free textbooks,free uniforms, free notebooks, teaching aids, science equipments have been provided..Under secondary education scheme ,construction and renovation of class rooms ,science lib. purchases of teaching aids, furniture was made. To ensure quality education to these tribal

students, in-services training for teachers was arranged by the administration in Mainlands institutions . Purchases of reference & text books,magazine, in the libraries,development of play grounds, stadiums walls,conducts cultural activities , separated funds were allocated in this schools.



**Table 2. Allocation of seats for tribal students in mainland institutions.**

Discipline	2001-2002		2002-2003		2003-2004		2004-2005		2005-2006	
	Seats Reserved	Seats utilized in %	Rd	Seats utilized in %	Rd	Seats utilized in %	Rd	Seats utilized in %	Rd	Seats utilized in %
B.E %	18	Nil	18	2 11.11%	18	2 11.11%	19	1 5.26%	19	1 5.26%
<b>MBBS</b>	3	2 67%	2	2 100%	3	3 100%	4	4 100%	4	4 100%
<b>NIT</b>	5	Nil	5	Nil	5	Nil	5	Nil	5	Nil
<i>Other*</i>	18	3 16.67%	21	4 19.04%	23	1 4.34%	24	4 16.67%	23	3 13.04%
<b>Total Seats</b>	44	5 (11.38%)	46	8 (17.39%)	49	6 (12.24%)	52	9 (17.30%)	51	8 (15.68%)

Source: Educational Reports,2006-07 )Note: Rd= Reserved

\* Other Courses : Diploma, General Nursing, Hotel Management, Craft Courses, PG Courses, B.Ed, Para Medical, BHMS etc.

Reservation of seats for S.T. candidates for major technical and professional courses for last five years has stated that central govt. has been allotting 20% seats for them out of total seats allotted for Islander's students for higher institutions. Except medical course, in B. Engineering Courses and National Technology Institution seats reserved against S.T. candidates were not being utilized. Similarly in other professional and non-technical seats reserved against the tribal students were not utilized properly. Only 10% to 18% seats were utilizing for tribal candidates against the seat reserved for them(table 2). Hence due to unavailability of tribal candidates for filling up these seats, the

unutilized seats were transferred to non-tribal candidates. As a good number of students are not found in science stream at school level, so the major seats are being unutilized so far.

### Observations

- 1) The Literacy rate of island's tribal is 47.02% (1991) as compared to Mizoram (88.8%) and Nagaland (66.60) tribal dominated states. Though as compared to all India level, the literacy rate of island's tribes was very high (India 24.60%).
- 2) Educational infrastructure facilities available in tribal areas



- are very poor when compared to educational facilities available in non – tribal areas of UTs.
- 3) The administration is committed towards the reservation of 20% seats for island's Tribal in higher technical & professional educational level in mainland bound institutions, but on the other hand, the numbers of eligible tribal students are not available for this quota seats. Last five years statistic shows that only 15% of seats (out of total seats reserved for Tribal) have been utilized by the tribal candidates against the quota seats reserved for them.
  - 4) The prevalent practice of compulsory passing up to the eighth standard results in a drastic increase of failures.(up to 50 %) in standard IX and only 20 % make it through standard X and less than 5% enroll for the higher secondary level.The results of science streams in Boards in tribal schools is very poor (Car Nicobar school the result is zero per cent).
  - 5) Shortage of quality and devoted teachers in (National commission for women) the tribal areas. Transfer in the tribal areas is considered as punishment for the staff.
  - 6) The far flung Islands in tribal areas are not well communicated (only sea transport) with education networks at headquarter.
  - 7) The total education system had collapsed in Nicobar district due to earthquake followed by Tsunami on 25<sup>th</sup>. December 2004 The school buildings, infrastructures of entire Tribal dominated islands have been badly affected.
  - 8) The Nicobari vernacular (dialect) is not followed as medium of instruction in school teaching. As result, the children of Nocobari community are face problems to follow Hindi or English taught in schools.

### Conclusion

The reservation policy in higher education institutions in mainland would be meaningless for tribal communities, unless quota seats are being utilized by them. The administration's Education Department needs to be serious about the policy and initiatives by increasing the number of tribal students in science stream at school level. A good number of tribal students need to be identified at primary level and give them proper education facilities. In this direction the responsibilities can be given to schools like Carmel School, Vivekananda School, Kamraj, Neval Public School, with a fixed quota for them. Similarly, in mainland standard schools can be accommodated few students for better education. One a good number of tribal girls were admitted in Banasthali



Vidyapith, Rajasthan in the early eighties, but now-a-days only few girls are taking education in this institution. The matter should be taken into account and try to find out, why the parents are losing interest to send their children in such facility oriented education institutions. In this direction village captains and church priests should take initiative to convince the villagers for availing good education facilities for their children.

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